

THE
BRAZEN MASK.

A ROMANCE.

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A Romance.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.



BY

MRS. CHARLOTTE PUTNEY,

AUTHOR OF CORA, &c.

As by degrees, from long, though gentle rains,
Great floods arise, and overflow the plains :
So men from little faults to great proceed,
Guilt grows on guilt, and crimes do crimes succeed. WANDESFORD.

VOL. III.



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BRAZEN MASK.

THE morning sun, which shed his exhilarating beams on all, could throw no ray of light on the dark dilemma Orlando was plunged in. When De Torza entered the chamber, Murdico communicated his suspicions.

"It is well," replied his master; "I would have it so; for we must work him up to frenzy ere I shall gain my point." He drew the curtain aside, asking Orlando how he was.

"As well as the thought that my father instigates me to *murder* will let me be," he answered.

"This squeamishness, this womanish
VOL. III. B weakness,

weakness, you must divest yourself of, or I cannot own you for my son," said De Torza.

"Would to God you never had!" replied Orlando. "Oh that you had suffered me to remain in the peaceful quietude you found me in at the good Mezenza's!—there I was happy—there I was instructed in innocence only—there I was not incited to acts of murder! Think you I can regret losing the title of *son* to such a monster as you?—Can I ever form my lips again to call you father? No, no—impossible! Why did Heaven ordain that I should be born of such a parent! From henceforth we are no longer father and son—I renounce all relationship with you."

"And with your mother also?" said De Torza, interrupting him.

"My mother—my dear, unfortunate mother!—Heaven shield her from you!" fervently replied the son.

"And Adela—you will, in your fanatical

tical imagination, give *her* a seat in heaven, I suppose?" demanded his father ironically.

"She, as well as her mother, will rest where you, with your present evil heart, can never go. Oh, De Torza, repent ere it is too late!—awake on this side the grave—arouse, ere you sink into everlasting torments—renounce your evil intentions—convince me you are indeed my father, by quitting the mazy path of vice, and then I will again be your son," said Orlando, catching hold of his father's hand.

"It is a pity I did not educate you for the church," he replied; "you would have made an excellent canting priest; but I am not to be preached out of my resolution; so sign this paper instantly."

"I will die first!" answered Orlando. "Shall I agree to take away the life of a person I never saw?—of an unoffending being, who never injured me—of a

man whose character I admire—of one who is the father of his people?”

“Then you agree that *I* shall take away the lives of Adela and your mother,” said De Torza, “who you have made me believe are so very dear to you! But, be it so, as it is your wish; they will soon be in that heaven your fancy was a few minutes ago placing them in. You have sealed their fate; for I shall no longer dally, nor request you any more to sign the paper.” Rage flashed from his eye, as he drew a dagger out of his belt, and imprecating vengeance on the head of Orlando, he darted out of the room.

Fear lent Orlando speed, who, throwing his morning gown over him, sprang out of bed, and pursued De Torza, who he overtook at the door of Elvira’s apartment.—“I yield,” said the youth—“I consent to sign!”

“It is too late,” replied De Torza, as he

he put the key into the lock; "you should have done that sooner."

"Oh, let the two innocents within but live, and I will be your creature," said Orlando: "on my knee I beg their lives—spare, oh spare my mother, and my Adela!"

"Sign within this moment then," answered De Torza, as he once more presented the paper.

Orlando took the detested scroll, and still kneeling, signed it in a fit of frenzy; but he had no time for deliberation, for it was to save the lives of those he loved to adoration. He resembled a man just fallen from a precipice, who looks around him, and is surprised to find himself alive; for he had consented to commit murder, and was astonished that he was not struck dead by a thunderbolt.—"Inscrutable are the ways of Heaven," said he mentally. "Am I to live till I have done the deed? Will not that

God who gave my soul, call it hence before it is stained by murder?"

While these thoughts were passing in his mind, De Torza had twice told him to arise, and perceiving his son heard him not, he shook him violently by the shoulder.

Orlando started, became sensible of his situation, and begged De Torza not to open the door, as he had no wish to see those within—"For," said he, "I would not for worlds behold them again, lest they should penetrate into the truth."

"You are right," De Torza observed; "the sight of women would unman you."

He took the young man by the arm, supporting him back to his chamber. Orlando gave a convulsive laugh, saying—"Now you may exult over your fallen son—now you may glory in having made him in intention a murderer! But ere the blow is given, think on the consequences; think that my soul will rise in judgment against you at that great day,

day, when all murderers shall receive their doom, and pointing to you, cry—
‘ *He* it was who urged me to the deed—my *father*, who basely taught me how to murder, and, Satan-like, propelled me on to the foul act!’

He had unknowingly laid hold on De Torza’s arm, and their eyes met.—
“ Hence, hence, boy !” cried the latter, “ nor fix on me thy piercing gaze, for that is more than I can bear : those eyes of thine strike deeper than daggers, for they remind me of one——oh, horror ! look another way ; they are the same eyes which fastened on me in death ! I can withstand them no longer.” He dashed Orlando from him, and hastened to his chamber ; but conscience, who was for once disturbed, made him fear to be alone, and he hastily sought Murdico, who soon laughed him out of all remorse. They returned to Orlando, who they found pacing the room to and fro, with hasty irregular steps : he some-

times stopped, and muttered to himself, then walked violently on, shewing strong symptoms of approaching derangement, though he could not yet be called a maniac. De Torza was not alarmed at the situation of the youth, and slapping him on the shoulder, said—"Let us to business, boy : this is the poniard I wish you to bury deep in the heart of Ferdinand."

He at the same time presented one, which Orlando took, and viewing it attentively, observed in amazement—"This is the same which——"

"Which I have taught you to use," interrupted De Torza : "I always chose you should practise with it, when I have given you instruction in the art of stabbing, in order that it might be familiar to your hand."

"Ha, ha?" Orlando exclaimed, wildly—"I shall soon be an adept at murder.—Give me your hand, Murdico ; I am thine equal ; for I am De Torza's son !"

Murdico marked the wildness of his
manner,

manner, and observed it to his master.

“Pshaw!” he replied; “it is only the effects of the weakness of his nature, because I have compelled him to do a deed repugnant to his feelings. A little time will absorb this new sensation, and he will be himself again. De Torza turned to Orlando, saying—“It is my wish you should instantly leave here, and make the best of your way to Madrid. Here are letters, which will procure your admission into the Escorial; and here are instructions for your future conduct.”

Orlando took the papers, and without speaking mounted his mule, silently taking leave of Toledo; for De Torza had informed him he was to go without attendants. He threw the reins round the neck of the animal, which travelled at its own pace, unheeded by his master, whose thoughts were lost in the chaos of his mind. The mule had slowly jogged on some hours, when feeling the scorching rays of the sun, he sought the

shelter of a forest—possessing at that time more intellect than his rider. Having grazed till the pressing calls of hunger were satisfied, he quietly stood beneath the shade of a large tree, patiently supporting his master on his back. Some time elapsed, when a voice said—“How long do you intend to stay there?”

The question was repeated, but no answer returned by Orlando, who was as incapable of understanding it as his mule. The interrogator, who was hid in the branches of the tree, descended, followed by a companion, and seizing Orlando, demanded who he was, where he was going, and what was his business.

He endeavoured to regain his recollection, and replied—“My name is Orlando—I am going to Madrid—and my business there is, to stab the king.”

The men burst into a loud laugh, saying—“That won’t do, my young master; that is all false; so don’t think to deceive us; for if it was true, is it likely
you

you would tell us, and endanger your own life? No, no, you have hit upon a strange excuse; but it is too strange to be believed; so tell us plainly what you are engaged in?"

"In the murder of Ferdinand," Orlando answered.

"Now do not tell me that again, or by St. Anthony I will make you repent it!" said the first speaker.

"Be quiet," interrupted the other; "cannot you see the young man is mad?"

"By St. Anthony, and so he is!" exclaimed the first. "Poor fellow! we must take care of him."

He with much compassion led the mule, while the other man walked by the side of Orlando. In this manner they arrived at their place of destination, which was a large cave, guarded by a sentinel; for they were robbers.—"How now, Pietro?" said the sentinel—"where do you mean to lead your prisoner to?—why do not you make him dismount?"

“ I intend to conduct him to the captain,” replied the man.

He passed on to that part of the cave where the captain was, who was a fine handsome man.—“ Welcome home, my boys,” said he to the two robbers: “ what booty is this you bring?”

“ A madman,” replied Pietro. “ We have been on the look out all day, and have not picked up any thing but this poor madman, who has taken it into his head that he is to murder the king!”

“ I have sworn to do it,” interrupted Orlando.

“ A strange conceit,” answered the captain; and turning to his lieutenant, added—“ It is doubly strange, that I, who am *not* mad, should be engaged in the same business!”

He was prepossessed in favour of Orlando, feeling an impulse which he knew not how to define; for the interest he took in the young stranger was stronger than what he had felt for many years.

He

He closely questioned the youth, but could not obtain an answer, except when he mentioned the king; then, and then only, Orlando seemed to awake from his deep meditation. The captain ordered him and his mule to be taken care of, and put to rest, not doubting but in the morning he should find him more rational. He was disappointed in this humane hope, for the morning presented his guest in a high fever. There were no papers about him to shew who he was, except his letters of recommendation to court, and a packet containing his instructions, which were sealed; and the captain was a man of too much honour to allow them to be opened. There was not any thing to be done but to wait the turn of the disorder, and the captain officiated as nurse, incessantly watching by the side of the bed. His patient raved repeatedly on the names of Adela, Elvira, De Torza, and Annette. The captain's curiosity was strongly excited, for
though

though he had never heard of Adela, or De Torza before, yet those of Elvira and Annette were familiar to him ; for fourteen years before there had been two females confined there of the same name ; and busy recollection conjured up to his imagination the form of his own Annette, whom he still fondly loved ; for the captain was Regolio.

A lucid interval at last appeared in his patient, whom he interrogated, and, to his extreme joy, found his Annette still lived, though he had no intention of intruding on her retirement. He told Orlando that after she had been forced from him by Leolfo, his uneasiness was so great, that the assurances of the Brazen Mask of her safety were of no avail, till the Mask consented he should see her, on condition that he should not speak to her, and be conducted to her place of confinement blindfold.—“ To this I eagerly agreed,” continued the captain, “ and was conveyed into her chamber,

chamber, where I silently gazed on her features, as she lay asleep in the middle of the night; but she suddenly awoke, fixing her eyes on us, shrieked aloud, and disturbed her mistress, who united her screams, and obliged us to withdraw through the secret panel by which we entered."

"You was then in the castle of my father," observed Orlando. "Strange incident that I should be thrown into the hands of one of whom I have heard so much, and of one whose every action would do honour to a prince!"

"No more of this," said Regolio; "as I am head nurse, I must impose silence till you are recovered, and then we will resume our conversation."

Orlando daily regained his health; but his mind was not so soon restored to its natural tone; for the reflection of having engaged to assassinate a fellow-creature, and one who had not given the slightest cause of offence, constantly occupied his thoughts;

thoughts; and he found no relief but in the society of the captain, who was unremitting in his attentions. Time increased their friendship; for though Regolio was a bravo, no one could know him without esteeming him. Orlando one day asked him if that strange character, the Brazen Mask, yet lived.

“He does,” answered Regolio; “and will shortly be here to accompany us to Madrid; for we have got into a disagreeable kind of scrape. A great part of my people are taken by the police, owing to having been betrayed into the hands of government, by the perfidy of one of our men; and we are determined to obtain their release, or die in the attempt. How we are to proceed is not yet resolved; but at all events the effort must be desperate.”

Orlando was shocked that a man he admired so much should be exposed to such danger, and expressed his uneasiness.

“Fear

“ Fear not for me, but think for yourself,” replied Regolio; “ though probably I may save you the trouble of committing a crime, which the purity of your nature recoils at.”

“ God forbid we should either of us do it!” Orlando said; “ but yet, if I do it not, my mother and my Adela must die. I will hasten on to Madrid, and abide your coming; for I have no wish to stay here, and fall into the hands of the Mask, who perhaps may not treat me with the same friendship his son has done. I should like an interview with him, but not on his own territories.”

Regolio was not willing to part with his newly-found friend so soon, and insisted on his staying, till his strength would allow him to travel; but agreed it would be right for him to quit the cave before the arrival of the Mask, whose jealousy would scarcely permit a stranger to leave it alive.

At the end of a few days Orlando set
forward;

forward; but not without taking a painful leave of Regolio, to whose kind assiduity he owed his life. When he had mounted his mule, the captain thus addressed him:—"From my soul I pity you, because you are a stranger to crime, and yet have bound yourself to commit it. That the king must die is certain, but probably not by your hand. The Mask has determined this great event shall take place; and I suppose it will be immaterial to your father whether the blow is given by your hand or mine; at all events, do not strike till we meet again. Take this medal—should any of our party meet, and attempt to detain you, shew it them, and it will be your passport.—Farewell! May valour guard you!"

Orlando followed Regolio with his eye, as he turned into the cave, wishing he had not been a bravo; for there was a fascination in his manner, which spell-bound those he had a mind to please; and

and there was something in the contour of his face, which made Orlando think his features were familiar to him. He reluctantly turned the head of his mule, and quitted the robbers' cave, where he had met with more kindness and hospitality than is sometimes found in a palace.

Orlando proceeded without molestation to the borders of the forest, where he met a large party of brigands, with the Brazen Mask at their head. Mechanically he stopped his beast, and sat gazing at the strange figure before him.—From hearing Elvira speak of this person, he had long ardently wished for an interview with him, and chance had at last completed this wish most unexpectedly.

The Mask rode up to him, and demanded—"Who are you?"

Orlando answered—"I will turn the question upon yourself, by asking—Who are *you*?"

"Insolence!"

“Insolence!” exclaimed the Mask.

“It is a question all Spain would have the insolence to ask,” replied Orlando, “could they be so fortunate as to meet you.”

“A rencounter with me is not thought a fortunate circumstance by every one,” answered the Mask, “and perhaps you will not in the end find it so.—My bravoes, seize this miscreant!”

“Hold!” exclaimed Orlando, as they advanced—“look on this!” presenting the medal.

“How!” said the Mask, as he viewed it in astonishment—“who gave you that?”

“A man, who is not ashamed to shew his face—one who has honour enough to tell his name, even Regolio the bravo: I wish you would imitate him,” answered Orlando.

“By the infernal spirits,” said the Mask, “was you not shielded by that gift of Regolio’s, I would crush you at
one

one grasp!—Am I to be taunted thus, by such a minion as thee, with impunity?—Hence, miscreant, escape for thy life; utter one word more, and I will pin thee to the earth!”

“ You have intimidated many,” Orlando observed, “ but I am not of the number. As to my life, I am careless of it: I would sooner be deprived of existence, than lose the opportunity of knowing a person of whom I have heard so much.”

“ Of me! have you heard aught of me?” asked the Mask—“ who was your author?”

“ A lady, who you detained some fifteen years ago in the robbers’ cave, for more than two years,” answered Orlando.

“ Her name?” demanded the Mask.

“ Elvira,” Orlando replied.

“ Begone!” vociferated the Mask, as he darted further into the forest.

Orlando attempted to pursue him, but was prevented by the brigands, who instantly

stantly formed a line between him and their leader, till he was out of sight. Orlando tried in vain to force his way through; but their numbers overpowered him, and they conducted him a considerable distance from the wood, with a full assurance that if he was ever found in it again, not even the medal of their captain should protect him. His disappointment was great, as he had for years wished to become acquainted with that singular character, who had dared to imprison his mother; for the courage of Orlando could not be daunted, even by the Brazen Mask himself. He execrated those who had prevented him from following a man, who seemed to live for the sole purpose of being a scourge to the human race, and reproached himself for not having taken summary vengeance on him while he was within his reach.

Chagrined at these untoward circumstances, he rode several leagues out of the main road, and saw before him an
old

old man carrying a large basket of figs, which seemed too much for his strength. Alighting off his mule, Orlando accosted the poor man with the usual salutation of the day, and desired him to place his burden on the back of the animal, which was more able to sustain its weight.

“ St. Catherine reward you,” said the vintner, as he accepted the offer; “ this is the first piece of humanity I have met with since I have lost my poor boy !”

“ Have you lost a son ?” asked Orlando.

“ As fine a lad, though I say it, as ever trod on Spanish ground,” replied the old man : “ oh, he was the prop of my life ! but he was too good for me, and that is the reason I lost him.”

“ Your affliction must have been great. Of what distemper did he ‘ die ?” said Orlando.

“ Alas ! I did not see him die,” answered the other ; “ if that had been the case, I should

I should have been certain he was happy ; but he was torn from me !”

Orlando looked in the old man’s face, when they rushed into each other’s arms ; for it was the good Mezenza. Utterance was for some moments denied them, and each pressed the other to his affectionate heart. A few tears relieved Mezenza, who first recovered the use of speech, saying—“ My child, thus let me for ever clasp thee !”

“ My loved father,” said Orlando, “ do I once more behold you ?—This unexpected meeting, in some measure, repays me for the past !”

None can enter into the feelings of these two persons, save a father and son, who have been so long separated by similar cruel circumstances.

They directed their steps to the cot of Mezenza, where Orlando had spent the happy years of childhood—where he had known nought but innocence and peace, which, contrasted with the tyranny

ranny he had suffered in the castle of De Toſza, seemed to him a little heaven. Each corner of the habitation was to him a resting-place—each tree in the vintage seemed as his old familiar friend. Joy filled his heart, as he wandered over the well-remembered spot; and pointing to one particular tree, asked why that was guarded with such peculiar care as to be surrounded by a little white paling.

“It is because it bears the name of my boy,” replied Mezenza.

He led him to it, directing his eye to the name of *Orlando*, which the youth had carved on it in his boyish days.

“You are, you must be my father,” said Orlando, taking his hand, “for your every action proves it.”

The old man shook his head, ejaculating—“Would to God I was!”

“Ah,” rejoined the young one, “how fervently do I join in that pathetic wish! I would to God you was indeed my father! then, though poor, I should look

up to thee with pride; thine honesty and virtue would add a lustre to my name, and thy silver hairs would be more valuable to me than all the pearls belonging to the deep! Alas, what a contrast does *he* bear who commands from me the respect of a son!—one, who is a slave to all the fiery passions of a blackened soul—one, who never instilled into me the slightest sense of virtue, but who has for years taken unwearied pains to instruct me in the art of murder!”

“Murder!” exclaimed Mezenza; “canst thou look me in the face, and say thou art a murderer?”

“I am not one in act, but in intention,” replied Orlando; “the deed is not yet done, but malignant fate propels me on to the foul act, or two innocents must perish!”

He related the oath he had taken to murder Ferdinand, to save the lives of his mother and sister.

Mezenza listened with horror, and remained

mained silent for some time after his adopted son had done speaking. The case was so complex, he knew not how to advise; for the more he considered it, the greater the difficulty appeared of extricating his unfortunate boy out of the labyrinth which was spread for his destruction.—“In what have I offended Heaven,” said he, “that I am thus punished? Which way I look, distraction stares me in the face! Why is the stony-hearted De Torza so gifted with callosity, as not to feel for those who are formed of his own blood, while *I*, who am no way related, tremble for the fate of my adopted son! No, no, Orlando, this must not be; this hand of thine was not formed to rob another of existence—thou must not, shalt not, stain it with the blood of our good sovereign! Remember, God himself has said—‘*Thou shalt do no murder.*’”

Orlando started, heaving a deep sigh, which wafted along the name of Adela.

“ Swear to me,” said Mezenza, “ that you will renounce the murderous oath, which your unnatural father wrung from you.”

“ If I break it, think of the consequence,” replied Orlando; “ think of my mother and my Adela ! Even now perhaps their blood flows ‘beneath the dagger of De Torza, owing to my tardy steps ; for ere this, I ought to have been at Madrid ; therefore let me hasten to save their lives, though at the same moment I lose my own ! Why, oh why, did Heaven ordain that I should be born of such a father !”

“ My child,” said Mezenza, embracing him, “ it is *I* who have exposed you to these dangers, by parting with you. I ought not to have given you up, when De Torza had foregone his promise of claiming you, three years ; but what could poverty effect, opposed to wealth ! He pounced upon me, as the eagle upon the defenceless dove, tearing
her

her unfledged charge from beneath her wing, so suddenly, he deprived me of my adopted son! Lulled into security, by supposing he would never trouble his head about you, I had not taken any precaution for your safety."

"How, in the name of wonder, came I into your possession? what could induce my father to place me in your hands?" asked Orlando. "Tell me all you know of this affair."

"In the morning I will," said Mezenza; "for your harassed looks bespeak a want of rest, which I entreat you will try to obtain, before I can grant your request."

Orlando agreed; but the old man remained firm, insisting he should seek that repose his agitated frame so much needed, and they separated for the night; but busy fancy fanned the imagination into a storm, which Somnus could not lull, and ere Aurora had undrawn the sable curtain of night, Orlando was

seated by the couch of his foster-father, to claim his promise.

Mezenza took his hand, and smiling said—"This eagerness does not surprise me, because I know it to be inseparable from the natural bent of a temper I have long studied. Listen, and you shall know all I am acquainted with concerning you.

"In my early days, I was obliged to labour hard for the support of myself and an amiable wife, who was snatched from me at an hour I doted on her most; for she died in childbed, leaving me a desolated being, without one earthly tie; for I buried her, with her infant, and all my hopes, in the same grave. I continued my occupation of fisherman as soon as my mind was a little composed; and it is about nineteen years since I was out one morning with my fishing-boat, when the sky blackened, and indicated a sudden storm. I rowed to shore, and sheltered myself under a projecting rock, till the danger should be past. The storm increased,

increased, the sea rose as if it would meet the clouds, the thunder growled destruction to all, and the vivid flashes of lightning seemed to light man on to ruin! The rock beneath which I stood was tottering over my head, owing to the immense peals of thunder, and I gave myself up for lost, but invoked the protection of all the saints, when an object, *which was in still greater danger, presented itself to my view.*

“ A vessel hove in sight, tossed on the bosom of the waves. In a moment she was hid beneath a tremendous breaker, and I immediately afterwards beheld her driven by the merciless winds. Sometimes the billows would heave her up an immense height, and then, as if for sport, roll from beneath, and leave her to be dashed down into the abyss of waters, which were ready to overwhelm all they met with. I saw that all hands on board must perish, but could render them no assistance. The masts and rig-

ging were torn away, leaving the vessel a mere trunk.

“ At last the storm somewhat abated, when the long-boat was put out, which proved a still more dangerous refuge than the ship; for the crew all being equally anxious to preserve life, leaped into it, without regard to number, that there seemed but a step between them and death. In vain those in the boat tried to prevent others from entering, for one man more, who held something under his arm, seemed determined to save his life at the risk of the rest; and leaping in, plunged the whole into a watery grave! Never shall I forget that awful moment, when I saw so many of my fellow-men dashed into eternity! I had not time for reflection ere I saw something white floating on the surface of the water, and fancied it was a little hand, which was held up imploring my assistance. I did not hesitate, but throwing off my outer garment, sprang into the
the

the sea, buffeting the waves with all my might. By this time the vessel, which I suppose had sprang a leak, went to the bottom, and there was not any thing to be seen of the ship and her crew, but the little floating object before me. I, with much difficulty, kept throwing the waves aside, and at last, caught hold of the object of my anxiety with my teeth, by a silken scarf, in which it seemed entangled; and in this manner I gained the shore, being much exhausted; and on examining my prize, found it to be an infant, apparently lifeless. My heart yearned over it as I chafed its little limbs, for I would have given worlds to have restored it; and with this idea I hid it in my bosom. This effort had the desired effect, and to my great joy, I perceived returning animation. I raised my eyes in thankfulness to Heaven, when I was startled at seeing a man scrambling up the beach, who was the same I had before seen leap the last into

the boat. I went to his assistance, still pressing my little charge close to my heart. The man was much spent with exertion, and I with difficulty raised him up, but found he was insensible to every thing around him. I put a little wine into his mouth, which I had in my boat; it revived him, and he placed his hand on his head, groaning deeply. I apprehended he had received a blow, which afterwards proved to be the case. I hastened to my cottage, which was no great distance from the shore, gave my little nestling into the care of an old woman who managed my household affairs, and got a friend to go with me to the exhausted stranger on the beach. We conveyed him to my home, put him to bed, when I examined his head, and found a large contusion, which was occasioned by his striking it against the boat. Old Marchelina and I dressed it to the best of our skill, and proved successful surgeons.

“ I had now time to look at the infant

fant I had almost lost my life to save, who was a lovely boy, apparently something more than a year old; and I was fully satisfied that the prize was worth the hazard I had run to obtain it. He was uncommonly handsome, rather Spanish complexion, with a pair of the most lustre-looking eyes I had ever beheld. He was swathed in a long white silk scarf, that was twisted several times round his body, which I suppose buoyed him up, so as to prevent him from sinking; and had a bracelet made of hair fastened on his left arm. This was all the clothing he had, which I have kept to this day. He was so extremely interesting, that Marchelina and I almost quarrelled who should officiate as nurse; and I thought if my own child had lived, I could not have loved him better.

“The next day the man seemed partly recovered, being able to sit up. I took the infant to him, thinking the knowledge of its preservation would as-

sist his recovery ; but, to my utter astonishment, he exclaimed — ‘ Does that child live ! Who was it saved him ? ’

“ I then related the danger I had encountered in attempting to rescue the infant, when he interrupted me by saying—‘ I wish you and the child had sunk together to the bottom of the sea ! ’

“ ‘ This strange wish I attributed to the hurt on the man’s head, and not to the badness of his heart. The poor babe I would willingly have kept from his sight, but he said—‘ No, you need not do that ; as it does live, I must take particular care of it.’

“ ‘ The man rapidly recovered, and the child as quickly grew in my affection, which made me fear losing it. From saving the stranger’s life, which in all probability I did, by curing the wound in his head and sheltering him in my cottage, when he had no other means of relief near him, it was natural to suppose he would have placed some confidence
in

in me, which he studiously avoided. He spoke but little—indeed so seldom, that I never could ascertain from whence he came, where he was going, nor even what the vessel was called which I saw him leap out of. I one day asked him if he would favour me with his name?

‘I never satisfy curiosity,’ he replied, with a black frown.

“At another time I ventured to set the child on his knee, and asked him if he was the father of it?

‘I hate inquisitive people,’ he answered.

“The child gazed innocently in his face, and this morose being looked earnestly at the infant, till their eyes met. The man starting, exclaimed:—‘Horror! those eyes dart lightnings into my soul; for they cry murder!—Here, good Mezenza, take the child away, for I cannot touch it!’

“I took the lovely boy off his knee, glad enough to get it into my arms again; and this strange man walked into
my

my garden to recover himself. As he grew better, his conduct became the more inexplicable. He had at this time been with me about a month, and early on the next morning said, he should take a walk, and wished to have the child with him, as it would do them both good. This surprised me; but I made no objection, determining to follow him at a distance, which I did, and saw him go into the same cavern in the rock where I had sheltered myself during the storm I before mentioned. I crept softly along, laid myself down at the opening of the cave, unperceived, and saw him place the child on the opposite side. He then returned to the spot where I lay, and taking one of my pistols from his pocket, which I always kept loaded in my bedroom, and which he had helped himself to, pointed it at the infant, who, unconscious of its fate, sat playing with the sand. There was no time to deliberate, and before he fired, I sprang up, and
with

• with one blow felled him to the earth. I wrenched the pistol from him, and kneeling on his breast, pointed it at his head.—‘ Now, villain,’ I exclaimed, ‘ it is your turn !’

‘ Mezenza,’ said he, ‘ spare my life, and you shall do what you will with the child.’

“ I then made him swear to give it me, which he consented to, and I let go my hold of him ; then taking the child in one hand and the pistol in the other, made the best of my way back to my cottage, and instantly sent Marchelina off with the infant to a relation of hers. The man returned in about an hour, not in a very good humour, you may suppose. —‘ Mezenza,’ said he, ‘ you and I must part.’

‘ Without regret,’ I replied, ‘ as I do not wish to detain one who I must always look upon with horror ; though as long as you needed my assistance, and

,

I was

I was a stranger to your character, it gave me pleasure to shelter you.'

"He interrupted me, saying—'No more of this: had I known your willingness to keep the child, I need not have resorted to extremities; and perhaps it was as well you prevented me making away with it; for there are circumstances concerning the boy which are buried in my breast only, and it may be necessary some day or other to produce him. There is something in his eye which almost drives me to madness; and that was the case this morning. Now, mark what I say. I give him to you for seven years: at the end of that time, I shall most likely return and claim him; if not, you probably may never hear of me more. The peculiar mark he bears will prevent your deceiving me, should you be so inclined.' He then undid the lining of his coat, and taking out a purse, threw it at me, saying—'That will reimburse you for the expence you have been

been at on my account. Go and reside near Cevolla.'

'What is the child to be called?' I demanded.

'*Orlando*,' he replied; and turning on his heel, went I know not whither."

Here Orlando interrupted Mezenza, saying—"Oh, tell me, father, am I that same Orlando?" pointing to the mark before alluded to.

"You are indeed that child of misfortune," answered Mezenza, while tears of compassion coursed each other down his venerable cheek. But hear the sequel of my story:—

"To my great surprise, the purse contained more than I had any idea of, which enabled me to leave my fishing trade, and follow the man's direction; for I shortly removed here, it being in the vicinity of Cevolla, and purchased this vintage, which has supported me ever since. Seven years rolled on without interruption. At the end of the seventh,

I was

I was miserable at the thought of losing my beloved charge; for the reflection that I had twice rescued you from death, and your infantine affection towards me, had rivetted you close to my heart. I never told you these circumstances, intending, if you was not claimed, that you should live and die in the belief of being my own son.

“The eighth and ninth years passed in tranquillity, and we were happy. I had now no fear of losing you, and seemed wrapped in security. The tenth year was almost completed, when, alas! the same man appeared, and darting on my loved boy, tore him from me, like a vulture seizing its prey, regardless of the parent’s cries.”

“Then the man you speak of is De Torza?” exclaimed Orlando.

“I believe him to be your father,” replied Mezenza.

“Heaven forbid!” sighed the youth:
“yet I never could find any proof to
the

the contrary ; and my mother tells me, I was taken from her in infancy, after being to all appearance dead. How—oh, how came my amiable mother to marry so strange a man as De Torza !”

There was not any thing in the narrative of Orlando’s first years which could throw the least elucidation on the conduct of De Torza ; nor could any reason be found for his having taken him at such an early period from the arms of Elvira.

The heart of Mezenza was torn with anguish, on finding his adopted son so dreadfully situated, with respect to the consent which had been extorted from him, to destroy so good a man as Ferdinand ; and he conjured him, by all the kindness he had ever shewn him, to forego the intention. But Orlando weighed the lives of Elvira and Adela in the opposite scale, and found it preponderate. He tore himself from the only man he respected as a father, and
turned

turned the head of his mule towards the court of Spain, where he arrived without interruption.

Alighting at the Escorial, he delivered his letters of introduction, and was immediately ordered into the royal presence. As he passed, the guards eyed him with scorn, and the page who conducted him could scarcely conceal his astonishment, that one without a single attendant should claim an interview with his august master.

The object of their surprise heeded them not; for he was too deeply musing on his mission to notice what was passing, and found himself at the door of the antechamber, which led to the royal apartment, ere he was aroused from his reverie. The day being unusually warm, the door was open, and the page entering, bade him stay there, leaving Orlando to make his own observations.

The antechamber was a spacious room, floored with white marble: slabs of grey
marble,

marble, with massy gold ornaments, supported vases of the purest white, where the odoriferous orange bloomed, and ripened in its native soil. The windows were shaded by green lattices, where the fig-tree and the vine had thrust their tempting fruits, to the exclusion of the scorching rays of Sol. An artificial fountain was fixed in the centre of the chamber, which was worked by a machine beneath, adding a grateful coolness to the whole, so truly acceptable in so hot a clime. The ceiling of the room was exquisitely painted, representing seraphs, emerging from azure clouds, holding golden harps.—“Those pure beings, so well imagined there,” thought Orlando, as he fixed his eyes on the paintings above him, “had they committed murder, could they have hymned the praise of their Creator?”

He had thrown himself on one of the sofas which were arranged round this enchanting room, buried in deep reflection,

tion, and the page had spoken twice before Orlando heard him.—“ His majesty admits you to his presence,” said the page.

Orlando started at the intelligence—confusion flushed his face, and he stood viewing his conductor with speechless trepidation.

“ Fear not my royal master,” resumed the page ; “ if you come to seek for justice, he will grant it—if you are overwhelmed with grief, he will assuage it. Let me advise you not to keep his majesty waiting.”

The persuasive voice of the youth recalled the wandering senses of Orlando, who, bowing, silently followed his guide into the presence-chamber, where were several noblemen, who immediately retired. “ The king was seated at the upper end of this spacious apartment, representing youth and age combined. There was nothing in his manly form which bespoke the number of years that had rolled over his head, except his silver

ver

ver locks, blanched by the hand of time. His eye was bright and penetrating—his voice clear and strong—his conception quick and unerring. One person only remained, who was leaning over the back of the sofa on which his monarch was seated, and with solicitous inquietude was saying—"I entreat your majesty not to transact any more business to-day."

"I will only give audience to the bearer of these papers," said the king, "and you shall have your way."

The page now advanced, whose sentiments were changed in favour of the stranger, upon his majesty casting his eyes on the signature of the papers, and ordering the person who brought them to be immediately admitted: such is the influence of the patronage of a great man! The page, perceiving his master had done speaking, announced don Orlando De Torza.

Orlando advanced, and dropping on
one

one knee, kissed the extended hand of his monarch.

“Welcome, young man—welcome to the court of Spain,” said the kind-hearted Ferdinand.

Orlando struck his forehead, exclaiming—“My God! does he welcome his murderer?”

Consternation seized the king, and the person who was with him quitting the sofa, raised Orlando, who was still kneeling, with his eyes covered by his hands, as if dreading to encounter a second glance from the man he came there to destroy.—“The stranger is ill,” said the gentleman—“very ill,” he added, feeling his pulse.

“Poor youth! I am glad he has fallen into our hands,” observed the king.—“Cheer up, my young friend, you shall be taken care of: Fernandez will be your doctor—Osberto shall be your nurse—and I, when state affairs will permit, will be your companion.”

“This

“ This is too much !” cried Orlando. “ Can I kill the man who tries to save me ?”

“ How dreadfully he raves !” said his majesty ; “ prescribe quickly, let no time be lost—his malady is fast increasing.”

The doctor, who was no other than the king’s own physician, who resided constantly in the palace, gave it as his opinion that the illness of Orlando had been rioting in his veins some time, which, owing to an over exertion of mind or body, had burst forth with irresistible violence.

The physician’s observation was just, except that the patient was not so entirely delirious as was supposed, having a confused idea of what was passing, though his fever was high, and his mind torn with a conflict more pitiable than the disorder of his body.

He threw himself at the feet of Ferdinand, saying—“ Behold your destined murderer ! Do not throw away your
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compassion on a wretch who came here to imbrue his hands in your own blood !”

“ Unfortunate youth,” sighed the king, raising him, and supporting his burning head, “ these wild paroxysms will be too much for thy frame, though formed in Nature’s strongest mould. I will be to thee father, guardian, friend !—What strange possession can have seized thy mind ?”

“ It is this,” answered Orlando “ Three victims are doomed to die ! if two die, one lives ; if one lives, two die. Say, shalt thou live, and two die, or shalt thou die, and my mother and my Adela——ha, ha, ha !”

He did not finish the sentence ; but laughing wildly, seized the arm of Fernandez, and fixed his eyes intently on him.

“ Fernandez,” said the king, “ behold the countenance of this stranger ; do not his features remind you of a friend who was once dear to us ?”

“ They do indeed,” replied the physician

sician, “ of a lamented, valued friend. Is this young man the son of De Torza by his first, or second marriage ?”

“ By his second wife, no doubt,” replied his majesty ; “ for he tells me in his letters he had no children by the first : but whoever the youth is, matters not ; he claims our pity, and shall have it.”

Assistance was ordered in, when Orlando was conveyed to another apartment and put to bed, attended by the king’s physician, who found it necessary to prescribe copious bleeding. The patient still entreated those around him not to attempt to save one who was destined to destroy their sovereign ; and when he saw the attendants searching his things, he said—“ No, no, the dagger is not there ; I left it in the robbers’ cave.”

The doctor exerted his utmost skill ; and in order to reduce the violence of the disorder, so far lessened the strength of the sufferer, that he was brought to infantine weakness ; still it could not be

said the danger was past, though Orlando was incapable of raving now, and seldom spoke; yet when he did, he never uttered any thing but the names of Elvira, Adela, and Ferdinand.

The monarch felt an interest in the fate of this young man he could not account for, and was one morning leaning over his sick bed, when Osberto entered with a letter in his hand, directed to Orlando, which was left at the gate of the palace by an unknown person, who immediately rode off. The patient was too ill to read, and Fernandez hinted that the existing circumstances would authorize his majesty to make himself acquainted with the contents of the letter.

“No,” said the monarch, “that I will not do; every one has his private concerns, and far be it from me to pry into the family secrets of the meanest of my subjects.”

Such was the honour of Ferdinand. Time flew, and though there was something

thing unfathomable in all that related to Orlando, yet the letter remained unopened.

At last the violence of the fever had spent itself, and left him plunged in deep melancholy. It was at this time that the king would lay aside his dignity, and become the amusing companion and anxious friend of his new *protegé*. The suavity of the monarch was irresistible, and so far crept into the heart of Orlando, that if the forfeiture of his own life could have served the king, he would willingly have laid it down; but there were two lives more precious to him than his own, whose existence was placed in his hands; but how was it possible to plunge a dagger to the heart of Ferdinand, who had bound him by the strongest tie of gratitude! If he had made a confidant of the king, and told him the real situation of affairs, he must endanger the life of his father, the father of his Adela.

The physician proposed that don De Torza should be made acquainted with the illness of his son ; but the king said —“ Not so, I cannot consent to that, for from what I have learned from this youth, De Torza is not of an amiable disposition, and perhaps his presence might have a fatal effect on your patient : there may be unhappy differences between them, and we will let it be till the young man is able to say whether he shall be sent for or not.”

Compassion on one side, and gratitude on the other, made Orlando adore the man he came to murder.

Convalescence began in some degree to appear in the patient, when Ferdinand, who was one evening seated on the same sofa by him, taking his hand, said—“ I think, my young friend, I can prove a better physician than doctor Fernández ; for I am possessed of a certain cure for your malady.”

“ Indeed !”


“ Indeed !” said Orlando ; “ may I ask your majesty what it is ?”

“ It is this,” answered the king, presenting the letter alluded to before, “ and no doubt comes from the ladies you have so often mentioned in your illness.”


Orlando, with a trembling hand, hastily opened it. His cheek was flushed, but in a moment became pale as marble ; and thrusting the letter into his bosom, he fell back apparently lifeless. It was some time before he recovered ; and fixing his eyes on the king, emphatically said—“ Your majesty’s remedy is—death.”

The monarch was grieved that he had imprudently done any thing to injure the youth, and severely blamed himself for having trusted him with the letter ; for by so doing, he feared Orlando had received his death-blow ; such was the interpretation he gave to his last emphatic words. A relapse was the consequence, and the patient was put to bed

in a hopeless state. The letter fell from his bosom, as he was carried out of the apartment, and was picked up by Osberto, who read, and gave it to Fernandez. It was without signature, and ran as follows:—



“ You hesitate, do you? Delay giving the blow longer than twenty-four hours at your peril! for if it is not given within that time, after the delivery of this, I will wash my dagger in the blood of those you profess to love!”



None present could interpret the epistle, save him it was addressed to, and he saw his misfortunes at last were crowned; for several weeks had elapsed since this laconic threat had been delivered, and he had no doubt but the lives of Elvira and Adela had been sacrificed, because he could not turn assassin. His
grief

grief was too great for utterance, as he did not speak for many days, till the king was lamenting that he had been the cause of his relapse, when Orlando taking the extended hand of Ferdinand, said—"Your majesty need not fear me now, for I have no incitement to become your murderer! the reward, alas! is no more! great as the boon was, I could not raise my hand against you!"

Grief had given a melancholy tone to the voice of the patient, which touched the heart of Ferdinand to the quick; and supposing his senses still to be wandering, he let fall a tear, entreating him to live; but Orlando shook his head.

Affairs stood thus, when his attendants finding he had fallen into a doze, had withdrawn; but Orlando was aroused by a rustling at the further end of the chamber; and raising himself, beheld the—Brazen Mask.

"Stir, and you die!" said the Mask.
"Listen to me.—Regolio, captain of the

band of brave men whom you saw in the robbers' cave, was destined by me to rid Spain of a monarch who has reigned too long; Regolio's existence is necessary to my plans, and his life may perchance be lost in taking that of Ferdinand. The captain has informed me that your father, don De Torza, has sent you hither for the same heroic purpose; execute the deed, and you shall be the third person in the kingdom; rewards shall shower down upon you, worthy of so great an action!—You have gained entrance into the palace—you have sunk deep into the affections of Ferdinand—you are frequently alone with him, and with the assistance of this dagger, which you left in the robbers' cave, the deed will be more facile to you than to Regolio."

The Mask ceased speaking, and presented the dagger, which Orlando took, and found it to be the same his father had given him on his leaving Toledo, and

and which ^{he} had dropped in the robbers' cave.

"There is ~~but~~ one man's heart I wish to plunge this dagger into," said Orlando.

"And that is doubtless Ferdinand's," rejoined the Mask.

"No, it is thine, monster!" exclaimed the youth, starting out of bed, and aiming a blow with it at the Brazen Mask, who sunk beneath the poniard, and was seen no more.

Orlando stood lost in amazement, as his attendants rushed into the room, on hearing a noise in his apartment. None dared take the weapon from him, for timidity seized them on seeing him in so strange a situation, and one of them ran to inform the physician.

The doctor immediately followed, accompanied by the king, and several of the household. Orlando had not recovered his surprise, and stood in the same attitude, with his hand clenched on the dagger. Fernandez desired his majesty

to stand back, and going up to Orlando, mildly asked him to resign the weapon.

“Take it,” said he; “for the wretch has vanished whom I would have given worlds to destroy! But tell me whether I dream or not?”

The doctor took the poniard from him, and endeavoured to quiet the agitation of his patient, by trying to persuade him that whatever had happened was occasioned by a disturbed imagination in sleep.

“No,” said the youth, “that is impossible; for the monster stood here on this very spot; I talked with him, he placed this dagger in my hand, with which I aimed a blow at him, and he disappeared in an instant.”

“Who are you speaking of?” asked Fernández.

“The Brazen Mask,” answered Orlando. .

“The Brazen Mask!” exclaimed the king.

“It was no other,” replied Orlando.

His

His majesty immediately ordered the attendants to withdraw, and in great trepidation asked Orlando what he knew of this strange character.

The young man related all he knew of the Mask, in so intelligent a manner, as convinced the king that what had just passed was not the effect of delirium.—“Allowing that the young man had been dreaming,” said his majesty, “or was delirious, how came he possessed of this dagger?” at the same time taking it out of the doctor’s hand. Astonishment seized the king as he cast his eyes on it.—“This instrument,” said he, “I have seen before; examine it, Fernandez, and try if you can recollect* to whom it belonged.” His majesty touched a spring in the handle, which opened, and contained a small stiletto, marked with a cipher, set in diamonds.

“It is indeed the same I have often seen,” replied Fernandez; “but it is
many

many years since, and belonged to the person you allude to."

"When was it you first saw this instrument?" asked the king. "You may speak unreservedly, Orlando; for my physician is my long-tried friend and faithful companion, from whom I have no hidden secrets."

Orlando assured his majesty it was given him by his father, on his leaving Toledo; that his mind was too much engrossed by family troubles to be capable of taking the right road to Madrid, and he had suffered his mule to wander into a wood, where he was taken by some robbers, who conducted him to a cave, and presented him to their captain—"Who is the bravest man," added Orlando; "and at the same time the most compassionate one, in your majesty's dominions—having but one fault, which is, that he is a bravo."

"Then it was in this cave where you dropped this dagger?" asked the king.

"It

“ It was,” replied Orlando. “ I have not seen it since, till it was returned to me **just** now by the Brazen Mask, who has escaped in so strange a manner.”

“ Strange indeed,” said Ferdinand ; “ that singular character, the Mask, has been the scourge of my family for years, yet I never could discover him, or have him taken prisoner, though it has been frequently attempted. It is many years since I have heard any thing of him, and I hoped he was not in existence.”

Orlando did not hesitate to acquaint the king that the Mask had determined on his death, and had that night presented him with the dagger for the same purpose ; for though he carefully concealed every thing which might implicate his father De Torza, yet he saw no reason for shielding the wretch who wore the mask, and hazarding the life of the monarch he sincerely loved.

The king was much perplexed, having never wronged one of his subjects, nor
given

given cause to any man to become his enemy.

The apartment was strictly examined, but no panel could be moved—no aperture could be found, by which the disagreeable visitor had made his escape. The physician proposed that his patient should quit the chamber; for by remaining there, it was evident his life would be in danger.

“He shall be removed to the antechamber of my own apartment,” said his majesty; “and if I can once more see him restored to health, he shall be my constant guard and companion; for I should think myself safe by placing my life in his hands.”

Orlando assured his sovereign, that if any thing could alleviate his malady, it would be the hope of guarding him from his secret enemy, and he would try to live for so noble a purpose.

The king, taking a ring off his finger, placed it on the hand of Orlando, saying
—“Should

—“Should my young friend ever wish for any thing in the power of Ferdinand to bestow, the sight of this ring will obtain it.”

The patient was immediately removed from that chamber, where his two friends thought it unsafe for him to remain; and the late occurrence having aroused him from the melancholy which grief had plunged him into, he gradually grew better, to the joy of his sovereign and physician.

Time seemed to strengthen the friendship which united these three persons, exciting the envy and curiosity of all the other inmates of the palace, who among themselves styled Orlando the young madman of Toledo.

Orlando, though he still mourned his lost Adela and Elvira, was now able to leave his couch, and was one evening walking with the king, whose side he seldom quitted, in the royal gardens, when a man, muffled up in a cloak, leaped

ed down from a tree, and with a poniard aimed a blow at the monarch; but Orlando threw himself between them, and received the stab in his right arm. The action was so sudden, that the king had not power to secure the man, who, to his utter astonishment, fled into the palace, and disappeared. His majesty supported his young friend, whose wound bled fast, to an alcove, where he rang an alarm bell, and the gardens were immediately filled with the guards of the palace, who were all equally amazed at this serious adventure. They bore Orlando in, who assured them his wound was slight, and would be of little consequence, having received it in so good a cause.

Some of the noblemen in waiting suggested that every person belonging to the palace should be examined by one of the inquisitors from the Inquisition, which was accordingly done; but not the least light could be thrown on this dark transaction.

The

The wound Orlando had received was not deep, and aided to bind the king still more closely to him.

Tranquillity was once more restored in the palace, for suspicion did not fall on any of its inhabitants, for each looked on his sovereign as an indulgent parent. The king, with his two friends, Fernandez and Orlando, suspected the Brazen Mask alone, but were ignorant of the manner of his gaining entrance into the palace. Great rewards were offered for the apprehension of this perplexing person, but in vain; no one could give the least information respecting him.

A few days after, as the king was hastily passing to the audience-chamber, followed by Orlando and some of the ministers of state, the same figure which attempted his majesty's life in the garden, crossed the gallery, and concealed himself behind a statue, which Orlando observing, made signs for them to surround

round the image, which they instantly did; but, to their utter astonishment, no person was to be found behind the statue, though all present saw him go there; and the strictest search was made in every part of the palace.

This last occurrence created uneasiness in the minds of all belonging to the establishment of Ferdinand, for no one thought himself safe, and each began to suspect his fellow. The king, whose life alone had been aimed at, was the only one who was sufficiently collected to go through the business of the day, which he did with a calm, unruffled mind; and when it was proposed that the guards about his person should be doubled, and his bedchamber in particular be filled with attendants during every night, he said—"No, my friends, there is no occasion for all this, though I thank you for your zeal; but having injured no man, I fear no man, and shall rest free from apprehension without any other

other attendants than my page, and my young friend Orlando.”

Each gently blamed his majesty, while each secretly envied the preference given to the young madman of the palace, as they sometimes called the brave youth.

Night approached, which seemed to all, save the placid Ferdinand, fraught with danger; he alone could see no cause of fear; and as long as his faithful adherents were undisturbed, thought not of himself, but retired to rest at his usual hour.

Not so Orlando, whose anxiety increased as the time of midnight drew near—that hour which has so often been marked by the foul crime of murder. At last the clock struck twelve, and the inmates of the palace were undisturbed: another hour elapsed, and all was peace; still Orlando dared not close his eyes, and it was near two o'clock, as from the dim rays of a lamp suspended from the ceiling of the apartment, he beheld the same figure

figure approach the bed of the sovereign, but did not perceive by what means he entered. The youth arose softly from his couch, and followed the steps of the intruder, who, halting at the bedside, stretched out his hand, grasping a dagger, over the still sleeping monarch. Orlando saw the loss of a moment might be fatal, and he instantly pinioned the villain's arms behind him, at the same time calling aloud to Osberto. The page, so suddenly aroused from his sleep, sprang up, but was not sufficiently collected to render that prompt assistance which was necessary; and it was not till the assassin had disengaged himself from the grasp of Orlando, that the page gave him a blow, which felled him to the floor. The villain still kept possession of the dagger, and was rising from his fall, as Orlando, seizing a pistol, fired at him, and shot him in the right arm.

The explosion of the pistol awoke the king, who now saw the danger he had passed;

passed ; and the monster dropping his weapon, for the first time spoke, execrating the hand which had wounded him. The guards were summoned, lights were brought in, and all anxiously gazed on the figure before them. He was of gigantic stature, black hair, dark scowling eye, almost hid by a brow which shaded it, hooked nose, curved lip, and cadaverous complexion ; he wore a Spanish hat, with a large plume of black feathers, and his person was enveloped in a long black cloak ; still he seemed to frown defiance on the numbers which filled the apartment.

“ At last,” said the king, “ at last my enemy is secured, and I now behold that scourge of my life, the Brazen Mask !— Pray who are you ?”

“ As you have just designated me the Brazen Mask,” answered the stranger, “ you seem to *know* who I am ; then why ask so unnecessary a question ?”

“ I believe you to be that desperate person,”

person," resumed his majesty, "though I would not hastily judge any man; but your height, your air, your figure, your dress, your dark purposes, all conspire to confirm the opinion there is nothing wanting but your mask. Doubtless you have reasons for not veiling your face on this one particular night.—Confess, and I will pardon your attempt on my life."

"Confess!" said the man with a sneer; "and am I to obtain pardon on such contemptible terms as to confess myself the person you would give your kingdom to annihilate?—No, I reject your proffered clemency!"

"Hardened sinner!" ejaculated the monarch. "Will riches tempt you?"

"They will not," replied the wretch; "I despise thee, and all thy gifts!"

The guards drew their sabres, and would have instantly dispatched him, had not the voice of the king withheld them.

"Strike!" said the man, as he bared
his

his breast; "for he whom you call the Brazen Mask will glory in his own death, since Ferdinand lives!"

"Villain!" interrupted Orlando, "I have twice conversed with the Mask, and know thee to be the same! Come on, and I will engage thee single-handed, for I am determined to defend the life of my sovereign, or die in the attempt!"

"Minion!" exclaimed the man, while his pale lip quivered with rage, "I should crush thee, as the reptile I set my foot on! and, like the worm, thou wouldst but have power to wreath thyself and die! Think not I would have waited this challenge, could I have grasped my dagger; but fortune has favoured you so far, as to let you splinter my right arm, and then your *courage* prompts you to dare me to the onset!"

"I had forgotten you was wounded," said Orlando, throwing away his sword, "and will wait till you are recovered."

“ Thank your generosity,” replied the man, with a sarcastic sneer.

The king ordered his arm to be bound up, and sent for immediate surgical aid ; but the stranger desired they would not trouble themselves, saying, he scorned the assistance of the king, and all his court ; for it was not a splintered arm that could ruffle *him* they honoured with the name of the Brazen Mask.

“ Strange man !” ejaculated the king. “ Say, have I ever injured you ? or has any one in my kingdom wronged you ? Speak, and you shall have redress.”

“ Yes, such redress as the feeble-minded Ferdinand can give,” said this inflexible character—“ such remuneration as I could not stoop to accept.”

“ Away with him,” said the king—“ it is useless to hold longer parley ! convey him to the Inquisition, and let him have justice, since he will not accept of mercy !”

“ Lead on !” vociferated the assassin :

“ but

“ but ere I go, mark me, Ferdinand, this is the last time I shall address you, therefore attend to what I say—Your tortures I smile at, they will be to me as the bite of the moschetto, which I brush off, and think no more on!—Try what you will, your life will be in danger.—Break me on the wheel, the Brazen Mask will yet effect his purpose!”

So saying, he followed the guards, who conducted him along the corridor; and passing the apartment which was originally Orlando's, he darted into it, and was never seen in the palace after. Had not the king and his adherents followed, and been eyewitnesses of this unexpected escape, they probably might have suspected there had been some collusion between the guards and their prisoner; but that was not the case; and after searching in vain, they all returned, astounded, chagrined, and disappointed.

To have a man in their possession whom all Spain were in search of, and

let him slip from them at such a critical moment, was mortifying beyond expression. The door of the apartment was ordered to be nailed up, and secured with bolts and bars, the whole of which were covered with a plate of iron, and two sentinels were constantly placed at the spot, the court being determined that the unwelcome visitor should not make his way through that chamber again.

The consternation in the palace was so great, that several of the inmates affirmed without scruple, that the assassin was no other than an evil spirit; and many a guard who thought he was a brave soldier, never passed that memorable door without crossing himself, and invoking the protection of the saints; such is the effect superstition has on weak minds. Another visit from this base intruder was hourly expected; but whether being shot in his arm prevented him from returning, or any other cause, was not known;

known ; but certain it is, he never molested his majesty again.

A letter was delivered to Orlando, said to be left by a priest, who immediately disappeared, without speaking. The handwriting was not unknown to Orlando ; for it was that of Annette, who he had no doubt had shared the same fate as her unfortunate mistresses, and was surprised to find she was in existence. The contents were as follow :—

“ MY MUCH ESTEEMED YOUNG MASTER,

“ Added to the calamities we have lately gone through, is that of your total silence. I need not depict to you the feelings of your mother and sister on this account ; nor is it necessary to inform you of the stratagem I have had recourse to, to convey this to your hand. Time will only allow me to say, that matters are now driven to the last extremity ; and that if you do not come to

our assistance, our beloved Adela will be lost. I am,

“Your humbly attached servant,
“ANNETTE DE COURVILLE.”

“She lives!” exclaimed the astonished youth, as he read the last line of the letter—“my angel and my mother live!” His rapture knew no bounds; and hastening to his majesty, he threw himself at his feet, entreating permission to leave his court immediately.

“That is the only request you could make which I would refuse,” replied the king. “I have hoped that death alone would separate us. No, no, my young friend, we must not part—I cannot spare my préserve. What can be your reason for wishing to leave us?”

“She lives! she lives!” was all that Orlando could articulate.

“Who do you speak of?” asked the king.

“My

“ My Adela !” was the answer.

“ That is the name you so often mentioned in your illness, and that is the lady you have so long mourned as dead,” said his majesty. “ If it is true that she is alive, I do not wonder at the wild joy so expressive in your countenance; but I must be certain you are not deceived ere I can consent to part with you.”

Orlando put the letter of Annette into the king's hand, who read it attentively; then returning it, observed—“ This lady seems to be your sister! Beware, my young friend, of encouraging a passion you would blush to own !”

Orlando stood abashed, and mournfully replied—“ She is indeed my sister! I have vainly endeavoured to quell the regard I feel for her, but it turns my reason down a wrong course; though I wish as earnestly as your majesty to conquer this fatal preference.”

“ Can none of the beauties of our court strike your fancy?” asked the king.

“None—because they are not Adela!” answered the youth. “But she is in danger now, and must be rescued. Rely on my relationship, as her brother—depend on my honour, as a man—and let me fly to her assistance.”

“I would this affair had not happened,” said his majesty; “I am loath to part with one who has twice saved my life.”

Orlando kneeled, and pointed to the ring on his finger.

“Ah, now you have gained your point,” exclaimed the monarch: “that, though a dumb, is an irresistible pleader. Go, my son, and honour guard you!”

It must not be inferred that Orlando entertained an impure passion for Adela; his sentiments concerning her were of a contrary nature: he adored her as a superior being; he looked upon her as a vestal too pure to associate with the inhabitants of this world; but his affection for her was so great as to exclude the possibility

possibility of his esteeming any other woman.

The king loaded his young friend with presents, and insisted that a proper escort should attend him, which Orlando declined, saying, he disliked parade, and had rather go alone; but he commissioned a person to wait on Mezenza, with a letter, informing him of his departure from court, and of the amity which existed between him and his sovereign, whom he went there with a fixed determination to destroy; which intelligence he knew would be a consolation to the good old man.

The adieus between Orlando and Ferdinand were many and sincere; and as the former turned his back on the Escorial, his heart dilated with honour and attachment to his king; while the eyes of the latter beamed with gratitude and affection on his young defender.

Luna had just began to emerge from behind an argent cloud, as Orlando com-

menced his journey ; so fearful was he *that an hour should be lost ere he arrived* at his destined goal, that not all the eloquence of the king, nor his other friend, doctor Fernandez, could persuade him to stay till morning. The slow pace of the mule but ill accorded with the ardent desire of his rider to arrive at the castle of Toledo. As night drew her sable curtain over the face of nature, the silver moon seemed determined to light our traveller on his way, by shedding her mild beams on his silent path.

He journeyed several hours without interruption, till coming to a place where two roads crossed each other, he halted a moment, to recollect which to take, when a man sprang up from behind a hedge, and seized the bridle of his mule. Orlando demanded his intention, and the man informed him it was to obey the orders of his commander, which were to take all persons prisoners who were found travelling that road. Orlando expostulated ;

postulated; but the man was resolute, *and blowing a shrill whistle, they were immediately surrounded by numbers.* They politely informed their prisoner, that they meant him no harm, but must convey him to a place of confinement, where he must remain during the pleasure of their employer.

This intelligence cast a damp over the spirits of their prisoner, who told them his detention would be of the utmost consequence; that if they would name the price of his ransom, the king himself would immediately pay it.

“If you belong to his majesty,” said the man who stopped him, “we shall guard you with tenfold care; so lead on, my comrades, and conduct your prisoner to our commander.”

Orlando saw that threats or entreaty would alike be thrown away, and suffered them to escort him in silence to their habitation, which lay at some distance on the left. A handkerchief was bound

before his eyes to prevent him seeing the road. At last they stopped, and making their prisoner alight, led him into the presence of their chief. The bandage was removed from his eyes, and Orlando perceived a fine-looking man, seated on an elevated chair, at the upper end of a long table: his face was partly shaded by a large plume of white feathers, which he wore in a Spanish hat. The chief, on viewing the stranger for a moment, exclaimed—"My friend! once more welcome to the robbers' cave!"

Orlando accepted his offered hand, and recognised his old acquaintance Regolio, the captain of the bravoës. A man of honourable pursuits, and a man at the head of dishonourable practices, perhaps never more cordially greeted each other than these two persons. Orlando was thankful he had not fallen into worse hands, and asked Regolio how long he was to be detained there?

"Not a moment longer, my friend,"
answered

answered the captain: "you are free. I have received orders from the Mask to detain all persons travelling the road my people found you in; but you, of course, I shall exempt. Stay and refresh, and then you shall proceed."

Orlando refused the invitation, saying, the business he was engaged in being of such importance, that a moment's loss of time might be fatal.

"Then if you will not favour me with your company, I must trouble you with mine," said Regolio; "for though I am not a woman, yet I have a little touch of curiosity, and long to know what sort of a courtier you have made. I will not cause you to lose time by detaining you here, but shall accompany you on your way."

Orlando thanked him for such consideration, being eager to communicate with the captain, who he still found had the same irresistible power to please; and taking his arm, led the mule, enjoying the
the

the company of the man he could not help esteeming.

“In the first place,” said Regolio, “does Annette live?”

Orlando shewed him the letter he had so lately received from her.

“Tell her,” observed the captain, “that her steady attachment to your mother but heightens my admiration—I dare not say love; but I shall ever reverence such a spotless life as hers. Would to Heaven mine had been as innocent!”

Though the captain was willing to condemn himself, yet Orlando saw much in him to commend; for he never had imbrued his hands in blood, and forbade his people to plunder; rather choosing to draw upon the exhaustless treasures of the Mask for the support of his establishment, than live upon the mite of the lonely traveller. If ever any black excesses were committed, they were executed when the captain yielded the command to his father. Regolio's only
fault

fault was, his implicit obedience to the will of his inexplicable father, the Brazen Mask. But how could the son of such a parent be infallible?

The conversation next turned on the court of Spain; and Regolio was much amused with the account Orlando gave of it, sincerely rejoicing that he had escaped committing the rash act he went there to execute.

“How strange it is,” said Orlando, “that we should be so singularly circumstanced, as both to be fixed upon to destroy an innocent man, and those who instigated us to the deed, are our own fathers!”

“I never question the conduct of mine,” replied Regolio; “it is sufficient for me to know his will, as I need no other inducement to execute it.”

Orlando wished his friend had had a better parent to obey, and asked him, why he had not visited the Escorial, as he at first intended?

“Because,”

“Because,” replied the captain, “the Mask changed his mind: he said he knew my courage was equal to the undertaking, but chance sometimes was against him; for in taking the life of Ferdinand, I probably might lose my own; and should that be the case, the loss would be greater than the gain; for, he added, Spain could not produce the man who could supply my place, and therefore the business must devolve upon another. I was not displeased,” continued Regolio, “that my father had altered his intention; for though I did not refuse, yet I never felt such repugnance to execute his will as in this affair. I am most astonished that he attempted the life of the king himself, which you assure me he did.”

“Pray,” asked Orlando, “did you ever see your father’s face?”

“Never in my life,” answered Regolio.

“Then I have,” said his companion;
“for

“for in his last attempt on the king he was without his mask.”

“Does he resemble me?” Regolio eagerly asked.

“No more than an angel of light resembles Satan,” replied Orlando. “The cadaverous hue of his complexion bespeaks the colour of his foul deeds; the satanic cast of his features portray the evil bent of his thoughts; the scowl of his eye——”

“Hold!” exclaimed Regolio; “this cannot be a description of my father; you must have looked on him with a prejudiced eye. Do I resemble the portrait you have drawn?”

“No one can be more unlike it,” replied Orlando: “why do you ask the question?”

“Because,” answered Regolio, “when I have requested him to unmask, he has bade me go look in the glass, if I wished to see the features of my father; and whenever I used to ask my mother if I

was

was like him, she always made me understand that I was. The reasons he gave me for his conduct in this affair were, if the hand of government should ever overtake and sacrifice him publicly, with any of his colleagues, to deter others from revolting against the state, I could not say this man or that man is my father."

"Was he ever foiled in any of his plans?" Orlando asked.

"Never, but in that affair relative to the king, which he may thank you for," replied Regolio; "and I fear he will not easily forget it. He acts with such cautious generalship, that it is almost impossible he should be defeated; nor do I believe that those persons he calls his colleagues know who he is, any more than you or I do. I am sorry you wounded him; because, whatever his conduct may be, he is my father!"

Orlando admired the filial attachment of the young captain, wondering it could exist;

exist; for though De Torza could not have been guilty of greater excesses than the Brazen Mask, yet Orlando felt not that affection for *his* father which Regolio did for his.

The turrets of Toledo Castle were discernible, as morning touched with rosy hue the passing clouds, and tinged with health the early shepherds, as they led their fleecy charge to crop the cool grass, ere the scorching rays of Phœbus had absorbed the sparkling dew.—“ Now, my friend,” said the captain, “ we must part: yonder is the residence of your father, and whatever your grievances are, I sincerely wish them redressed. Commend me to Annette, and, remember, you will always find a champion in Regolio the bravo.”

Orlando took leave of him with warmth, at the same time observing, his first obstacle would be to gain admission into the castle of De Torza.

“ That I will undertake to procure for you,”

you," said the captain, taking a long silken ladder out of his pocket, and throwing it up to the top of the wall; it caught there, fastening by two grapnels, which were attached to the end. The acknowledged son of De Tena, by unfortunate events, was driven to enter the castle of his ancestors like a thief; and climbing the ladder, by the desire of his friend, folded it up and kept possession of it; then taking a last look at Regolio, dropped down on the other side.

All was still, the inhabitants of the castle not being risen; and Orlando surveyed the building with a palpitating heart. He tried the doors and windows, but they were fast, and began to despair; till recollecting the ladder, he turned his steps to his mother's garden, which was walled round, and throwing the ladder to the top of the wall, gained admittance in the same manner by which he entered the outward grounds. He thanked Heaven for thus far assisting him,

him, and in order to screen himself from observation, climbed an orange-tree, whose thick foliage completely hid him. He remained in this exalted situation some time, and his impatience began to increase, as every minute seemed an hour; when, to his inexpressible joy, he saw Annette open a window, and leaving his hiding-place, he hastened to the spot, and threw some pebbles against it; he then lowly repeated her name. She started on seeing him, clasping her hands in ecstacy; but instead of screaming, put her finger on her lip. He understood her meaning, and she quickly disappeared. In a short time she returned, and beckoned him in. He instantly climbed up, and sprang into the arms of Elyira.

The tears of the mother flowed fast, as she so unexpectedly clasped her son; for her feelings were too acute to suffer her to speak; and Orlando leading her to a seat, was endeavouring to sooth her into composure, when the door opened: he

he heard a faint shriek, as his loved Adela dropped lifeless at his feet.

Annette had been to inform her of their unexpected visitor, when her joy was so excessive, and her agitation so great, that she could but reach the spot where he was, before she fell.

As Orlando placed the inanimate Adela on the sofa, he thought the court of Spain could not produce her equal, in feature, symmetry, and every grace that could adorn the woman. She presently opened her eyes, fixing them on Orlando, as he knelt beside the sofa, and throwing her arms round his neck, innocently embraced him, saying—"My brother!—my loved Orlando! now you are here we shall know no misery! Welcome, a thousand, and a thousand times, to the hearts of your mother and your sister!"

The joy of this enraptured quartetto (for Annette shared all the happiness as well as the misfortunes of her mistresses) amounted almost to delirium; and it was
long

long before either side could relate any thing intelligibly.

As Elvira would be satisfied first, Orlando gave a brief account of the late occurrences at the Escorial, being anxious to know what could have deterred De Torza from sacrificing his mother and sister, on finding that Ferdinand still lived. But they were ignorant of his reasons; for De Torza scorned a confidant, though he had fixed on Orlando as an accomplice; and they were strangers till that moment to the dreadful alternative Orlando was driven to—of either murdering the king, or exposing them to the disappointed rage of De Torza.

Each seemed to owe her life to the undiminished regard of Orlando, though by strange events he had been prevented from completing the wish of his father. They informed Orlando of the occurrences which took place at the castle during his absence. The morning after his departure from Toledo, De Torza
visited

visited Elvira, informing her that her son was gone to Madrid on urgent business, which would not allow him time to take leave of her. She was grieved and surprised at this intelligence, doubting De Torza had deceived her; and when week after week passed without news arriving from Orlando, she became almost frantic, fearing something fatal had befallen him. Elvira did not then know, that owing to the violent illness he was seized with on his arrival at the Escorial, he was incapable of writing, or desiring any one else to do so; and on his recovery he had every reason to believe his mother and Adela were dead, from the threatening letter he received from De Torza, which was given to him three weeks too late.

Suspense and anxiety had injured the health of Elvira, while melancholy had filled the heart of Adela, as they mourned over the uncertain fate of their still dear Orlando. They were aroused from
this

this monotony of grief, by De Torza visiting them one morning at an early hour; his countenance brightened by a smile, saying, he should expect the company of Adela to dine with him. Had a thunderbolt have rased the building to the ground, Elvira could not have been more astonished, and asking if she understood him, he was obliged to repeat his command before she could believe she heard him aright. It was not in her power to disobey her husband in this particular, or she would not have parted with the child of her heart for a single moment. What could be the cause of this new whim in De Torza, none could guess.

Annette, as she dressed her young mistress for this unaccountable visit, foreboded no good; and Elvira feared from it much evil. Adela was the most tranquil of the three; for her young heart bade her hope a change had taken place in the conduct of her father, and that he

was about to make them amends for his former harsh treatment. This thought raised the spirits of Adela above their usual tone; and when De Torza came to fetch her, she parted from her mother better than she would otherwise have done. He led her through a large corridor, which was ornamented with paintings and statues, of exquisite workmanship, down the great staircase, into a saloon fitted up in the most costly style, all which was new to Adela; for though she was born in the castle, she had never seen any part of it, except the left wing, which was allotted to the use of her mother, where she had bloomed and blossomed in seclusion.

De Torza conducted her to the upper end of the apartment, where was a person reclined on a sofa, to whom he introduced her. She could not return the courtesy of the stranger, as he arose to pay his respects, for she was so struck with the sight of him, that she forgot every thing but

but his features, which she stood contemplating; and thought, had she been introduced to the Brazen Mask himself, her surprise would not have been so great, having often heard her mother speak of that character. Adela stood motionless before the stranger, and De Torza apologized, saying, his daughter had never before been in company with any gentleman, save her father and her brother.

The person bowed, but Adela was still transfixed to the spot, when De Torza, biting his lips with vexation, took her hand, and led the way to the dining-room.

The party being seated, Adela's attention was again fixed on their visitor, who sat opposite to her; and it was in vain she attempted to convey any thing to her mouth, for her hand invariably dropped, and she still contemplated his countenance. He was no less surprised, and they sat mutually gazing at each

other, as De Torza vainly strove to draw off their attention. Any one besides himself would have smiled to see the consternation of his guests ; but he was chagrined beyond description.

The dinner passed almost in silence, when the lord of the castle again made an attempt at conversation, without success ; for the stranger appeared deaf and Adela dumb. Wearied with fruitless efforts, De Torza arose, and placing some papers before his visitor, said—" These are my conditions ; if you approve them, well ; if not, I must bind you to an eternal silence. I shall leave you alone to peruse them, and expect your answer in half an hour." He drew the arm of Adela within his, and left the room.

As soon as they were out of the person's sight, she eagerly asked her father who he was ?

" That," replied De Torza, " you will know time enough. I am mortified and astonished at your unaccountable behaviour ;

viour; for your father's happiness depends on your treatment of this person."

Adela looked surprised and grieved, saying—"I would do much to ensure the good opinion of my father, but much more to secure his happiness."

De Torza pressed her to him, and for the first time seemed to feel he was a father. He conducted her over the castle, shewed her the extensive grounds, all which he told her would at his decease be hers.

"But not to the exclusion of my beloved mother and Orlando!" exclaimed Adela.

"As to Orlando, name him not," said De Torza: "he is unworthy of a place in your heart; for he has plunged into a vortex of pleasure and dissipation, forgetting that he has a single relative at the Castle of Toledo. The gaieties of a court have drowned the affections of a son, too tenderly beloved; and I turn

from him with disappointment, to you, for my future happiness."

Adela trembled, turned pale, and burst into tears.

"This excess of feeling must not be encouraged, Adela," observed De Torza; "it is a poisonous weed, which will spread its baleful influence through your future days: obstinacy is the stem on which it grows, and misery will be the flower."

"Pardon me, my father," Adela replied, "if I feel for one so tenderly attached; for I know our Orlando will rise as the sun in full splendour—still brighter for the cloud which now conceals him from us."

"No more of this," exclaimed De Torza. "To change the subject—what think you of my guest?"

"I think him the most terrific creature that can exist!" she answered.

"Why, what is there in him to find fault with?" asked her father.

"Every

“Every thing which is disgusting,” replied Adela: “his countenance is so horrid, compared to yours—so unlike that on which I have been used to gaze—so totally opposite to Orlando’s——”

“Orlando again!” interrupted her father. “Let this be the last time you sound that name upon mine ear, for I have renounced him for ever!”

“Say not so, my father,” tremulously cried Adela: “remember he is your own, your only son!”

“As such I disown him: intercede for him at your peril,” resumed De Torza. “Would you spend your life with a brother, who asks not if his sister lives?—would you waste your moments in vindication of one who is an alien to his house—who has broken through all ties of consanguinity, and stamped his name with infamy?”

“I would do as my father would have me,” replied Adela, alarmed at the storm she saw gathering on his brow.

“Keep your promise, and all will be well; act as I direct, and I shall find that I have a child left yet,” said De Torza, somewhat softened by the terror depicted in his daughter’s countenance; for he began to think he had shot beyond his mark, in making her uneasy the first day of her emancipation from the left wing of the castle; and by light conversation amused her as they returned to their visitor. He held a large scroll of paper in his hand, which he was intently reading, as De Torza and his daughter entered the apartment, unperceived by him.—“We are returned too soon, count,” said De Torza; “I presume you have not finished your perusal?”

“I have concluded it,” replied the stranger, “and have gone through it a second time, and was perusing it a third time, that I might be confident my eyes did not deceive me.”

“You

“ You are prepared then to give me your answer?” said De Torza.

“ Not exactly,” answered the other; “ the conditions are so strange, they want some consideration.”

“ Do you hesitate?” asked De Torza. “ Then here we break off the treaty. I am sorry to find I am mistaken in one I thought myself thoroughly acquainted with; but it is impossible to know a man till you have tried him. The one I would engage with must be a man of decision—must have no qualms of conscience—must glory in desperation!”

“ And such a one I am—such a one you have always found me,” rejoined the stranger: “ it is not from weakness of mind that I hesitate; it is not that I think the reward you offer insufficient; but it is from a conviction that the business you propose is impossible to accomplish.”

“ I will remove all obstacles,” said De Torza.

“Enough! then I am your man,” replied the person.

A smile of joy lighted up the features of De Torza, as he caught his hand; and placing Adela's within it, said to her—
“As you value the peace of your father, so conduct yourself towards the count!”

The stranger imprinted an empassioned kiss on her hand, as Adela turned pale, shuddered, and fell senseless at his feet.

Not any thing could equal the perplexity of De Torza, and the consternation of the count, at the sudden indisposition of Adela. They placed her on a sofa, and De Torza was anxiously feeling her slow-returning pulse, while the count was kneeling by her side, supporting her head on his shoulder, when she opened her eyes, fixing them on his face for a moment; then turning to her father, faintly said—“I cannot bear to look at him! Let me return to my mother.”

De

De Torza flung her from him in a rage, pacing the room in violent agitation. The count vainly endeavoured to lessen the disgust so visible Adela had imbibed against him, and to quell the storm rising in the breast of his colleague, whose high spirit seemed near bursting the bounds of nature.—“Can any thing be done,” said the count, “to render me more pleasing in the eyes of this lady?—will she suffer me to dedicate my life to her happiness?—will she accept my hand and fortune?”

“No, no!” exclaimed Adela.

“Look you, count,” said De Torza: “I have changed my mind.”

“I hope not,” observed the count.

“Thus far I have,” resumed De Torza. “You shall marry my daughter to-night.”

“Shall I,” demanded the count—“shall I be so supremely blest?”

“I give you my honour that she shall this night be your wife,” De Torza re-

plied. "I did not intend the match to take place till a certain business was accomplished; but her untoward spirit has altered my determination. Believe me, count, you have formed a wrong opinion of the other sex, if you think an obstinate girl is to be coaxed like a man, who does not come up to her idea of beauty. No, no, that is not the way to proceed; my advice is, to marry first, and lock them up directly after." Then turning to his daughter, he continued—"Prepare to fulfil my wish; I have chosen this gentleman for your husband."

Adela kneeled in speechless agony, but could not plead her cause, her feelings having deprived her of utterance.

"Rise!" said her father: "you know me too well to suppose I shall alter my determination." He rang the bell, and a servant appearing, he ordered him to tell the housekeeper and Murdico to attend, who immediately answered the summons. De Torza addressing them, said—

said—"I commit my child into your keeping for a few hours: to-night she will be made a countess. Do you, Murdico, prepare for the wedding—procure a priest, light up the chapel, provide for the regaling my household, on this joyful occasion; give a loose to revelry, and let my halls resound with the jocund dance and song: but at the same time, have a watchful eye on the young bird I commit to your care, that she does not take flight before the marriage noose has confined her wings."

Murdico bowed compliance.

"And do you, Melina," continued the don, "lighten the spirits of my daughter, by representing the happy change which awaits her, in an union with a man of rank and fortune. Deck her in these jewels," putting a casket into her hands; "they are the same her mother wore the day I married her. Let not any thing be wanting, but make all things gay; and remember, I nominate
Felicia

Felicia as the future attendant of her young mistress."

Melina dropped two or three courtesies at the conclusion of De Torza's speech, saying—" Shall I have the honour to wait on my master's daughter for a few hours—and is my poor Felicia to be raised to be her own maid? Oh, gemini, that I should live to see this day!—Come along, donna, let me make my poor girl as happy as myself: pray make haste," turning to Adela, who was still kneeling, the picture of mute despair. " Lord, master, what a beautiful creature she is! but she is as cold as one of the marble saints in our chapel! Oh, saint Mary, what ails you, child?—don't you like to be married? Oh, gemini, that I might but be married once more!—Lord, Lord, I should dance till I dropped with joy!"

The count and De Torza could not restrain the risible muscles of their features, at Melina's wish for a husband; and

and the latter promised her a handsome dowry on her next wedding-day, provided she would be vigilant through the coming ceremony.

Melina made many specious promises and many humble courtesies to confirm the good opinion of her master, who was satisfied with her professions of fidelity, and told her to take charge of her young mistress.

Adela still remained mute, and her father roughly raised her, bidding her begone!

She was led out of the apartment, more dead than alive. The count offered to follow, but she waved her hand in silence, leaning on the arm of Melina. They went to the opposite end of the corridor, down a narrow flight of stairs, into Melina's room, and a convulsive sob burst from the heart of Adela, who leaned her head against her companion, giving vent to a copious flood of tears. The housekeeper did not interrupt the channel

channel which nature formed for grief to flow in, till her young mistress seemed somewhat relieved; then taking her hand, said—"So you think me the brute I seemed in presence of your father? Pray, my sweet creature, do not judge me by what you have seen, but by what you may hereafter find me. Though I should like vastly to be married to-night, yet I would not, were I in your place, have that great ugly fellow your father has chosen for you, if his two eyes were set in diamonds!"

"Are you not my enemy?" asked Adela—"have not you promised to persecute me?"

"No, I am not your enemy, sweet," replied Melina, "and do not intend to persecute you. I am a mother myself, and know how to feel for one who is torn from hers, as you are."

"Kind-hearted creature—how shall I reward you?" said Adela.

"We have not time to talk about rewards,"

wards," interrupted Melina; "for much must be done in a short time. Tell me truly, do you like this man you are going to be married to?"

"I tremble at his shadow," answered her young mistress.

"And you had rather avoid the match?" asked the housekeeper.

"I would give worlds to escape it," was the answer.

"So I supposed," replied Melina, "when your father told me and Murdico of it just now; and the thought struck me, that I should glory in preventing it."

"Oh, is that possible?" demanded Adela, throwing her arms round Melina. "Save me, save me, from this horrid marriage, and I will for ever love you."

"I do not promise to do it, though at least I will try," said Melina; "but cannot think where my madcap girl is; for without her we can do no good." She opened the door, calling—"Felicia! Felicia! where are you, child?"

"Here,

“ Here, mother,” replied Felicia, as she popped her head through a panel in the wainscot, on the other side of the apartment; then stepping on a chair, jumped into the middle of the room, and looked the picture of a mad woman. She wore a soldier’s jacket, a helmet on her head, had a sword in one hand, and a shield in the other.

“ Well, Filly,” said her mother, laughing, “ and who are you now ?”

“ I am,” answered Felicia, “ Alexander the Great! I have conquered nations, have slain forty thousand of mine enemies, taken ten thousand prisoners, and wounded fifteen generals. I have swept away all opposition with my sword, and now could weep because I find nothing more to conquer !”

“ Then that character is finished, I suppose,” said Melina, “ and you will soon begin another.”

“ Another !” exclaimed her daughter — “ a thousand more! For example—I shall

shall try Antipater, then Paulinus Æmilius, and reduce the Macedonian empire to a province: after that I shall try Julius Cæsar, then Cleopatra, and next Anthony."

"When you have run through all your characters," said her mother, "I want you to be serious for a few minutes."

"I wonder you can be so unreasonable, mother, when you know I never was serious one moment in my life," said Felicia, laughing.

"Well, but here is company present," observed Melina.

"That is something new," exclaimed her daughter; "for I have never met with any other company in the castle than snails, bats, and spiders."

"Make your obeisance to this visitor, who is no other than our young mistress, the lady Adela," said the housekeeper.

Felicia had till this moment stood
with

with her back towards Adela, and turning round, for the first time beheld her. —“ Beauteous sylph !” said Felicia, falling on one knee—“ would that I was a king for thy sake, as I should fall in love with thee at first sight. No wonder the don has kept such a glittering gem under lock and key for fifteen years, and then only intrusted it in the hands of my mother and I, who would not rob it of its lustre. How oft have I longed for your company to help me in waging war against hosts of moschettoes, who have infringed on my territories, and even infested my bedroom ! With such a colleague as you, what feats should I have achieved !”

“ Hold your prating nonsense,” interrupted her mother.—“ You must know, donna Adela, that your father has let Felicia have free access to his library, which has almost turned her brain ; for every character she reads about she instantly

stantly performs.—Do, Filly, be steady, and answer me one question.”

“ Pray do not ask more than one, mother,” said Felicia.

“ Well then,” demanded Melina, “ should you like to be married?”

“ Married !” exclaimed Felicia: “ I think I should, just for the pleasure of breaking my husband’s heart.”

“ Then I hope my plan will succeed,” said Melina; “ for the lady Adela is ordered by her father to marry a great count to-night; and as she is averse to the match, I see no harm in your stepping into her place.”

“ Bless you,” said Adela, “ for your good intention; but it will be difficult to manage; and if you can effect it, I fear my father’s resentment will fall heavily upon you.”

“ Do not make yourself uneasy about that,” said Melina; “ he knows I never feared him yet: but we have no time to
lose;

lose; so come here, Felicia, and attend to what I say."

"Tell me one thing," said Felicia—"am I to be a countess?"

"When you are married to this great man you *will* be one," answered her mother.

Away went the shield and sword—off was the helmet and soldier's jacket in an instant; and snatching a large silk scarf, Felicia began to try the character of a countess. Many were the languishing airs she assumed, and various were the attitudes she placed herself in; till Adela, though her heart was beating with anxiety, could not help smiling: but a disinterested observer would have been convulsed with laughter.

"Well, mother, I think it will do," said Felicia: "you shall see I will perform my part to the admiration of all present."

"Then let us prepare, my dear, and waste no more time," said her mother.

"Oh,

“ Oh, when I have once got a husband, how I will plague him !” ejaculated Felicia. “ Poor wretch ! he shall never have a will of his own.—Now, lady Adela, if I take this great baboon off your hands, you must promise me your friendship for life.”

“ I will, my young friend, and faithfully perform my promise,” answered Adela.

“ If the count, when he is my deary, should ever dare to contradict me, I know how to match him ; for I will give him just twenty-three such pretty wounds as the senators gave Cæsar, at the time they professed to love him best ; and like Cimber, I will hold his robe, while like Brutus, I give the stab that shall affect him most. Do you stand here, lady Adela,” said Felicia, “ while I try the part.”

“ Pray do not make such a noise,” said Adela ; “ my father will be surprised if he hears you.”

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“ He would be more surprised if he did not hear me,” replied Felicia; “ for he has been used to my noise ever since I was born; and many a time have I made him smile, when he has frowned on every one else. But to return to my new character. You are to suppose yourself my husband, who has just offended me; and I shall snatch up my sword thus, and give you a stab there, and another there, and one here——”

She was flourishing her sword at Adela, as Murdico entered.—“ The chapel is lighted,” said he—“ the feast is prepared—the musicians are waiting—the servants are in readiness, and no priest is to be had! The don should have provided a priest the first thing, knowing that Paulo was absent from the castle. A pretty rage he will be in, when he finds his project will be frustrated, and all owing to his own mismanagement.”

“ Have

“Have you been to the convent?” asked Melina.

“To be sure I have,” answered Murdico; “and all the lazy, rascally priests, pretend to be engaged: one is preaching, and fifty are listening—a hundred are praying, while some are fasting—and many more are feasting. Not one of the lazy herd would stir, though I told them my master’s daughter was to be married to-night!”

“Why, you old dolt,” said Melina, “that was the reason they would not come: they all pity my lady and her children; and as you told the fraternity that one of them was wanted to perform the marriage ceremony for donna Adela, by our master’s order, they all made excuse, because they suspected something wrong, as *you* was concerned in it. Here, take this ring to father Francisco—tell him I sent it, and beg he will come to us immediately.”

“Take it yourself,” replied Murdico:

“do not think I shall go at your bidding!”

“Go, and drown your ill-humour in a cup of wine, and leave the rest to me,” said Melina.

Murdico seemed inclined to take her advice in this particular, and quaffed some of the don’s oldest wine on the occasion, being joined by most of the servants in the castle.

Melina dispatched Jacobo, with instructions to bring a priest back with him, and began to prepare her daughter and Adela for the ceremony.

“Are you not wrong, Melina,” said Adela, “in sending for father Francisco? if a priest cannot be procured, I shall be sure to escape the marriage.”

“You will avoid it for this night only,” replied Melina; “but if a priest can be had now, you will escape for life.”

“I fear I shall be cheated out of a husband at last,” said Felicia; “and the next character I study must be that of
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an envious, disappointed, snarling, forlorn old maid. I am sure nature never intended me for any such person !”

“ Do not be uneasy, child,” her mother observed ; “ Francisco will not fail to be here ; but in the mean time, we must prepare. It will be necessary for you and Adela to change clothes.”

They immediately made the exchange, and as they were nearly of a size, no obstacle occurred. Adela was soon equipped, and ready to assist her companion ; but it was difficult to make her steady enough to stand still ; for she cut many capers about the room, at seeing herself differently attired, and tried so many airs before the glass, that time pressed fast : but when Elvira’s jewels were put on, consisting of a diamond necklacé, earrings, bracelets, wreath for the hair, and a band clasped round her waist, all of diamonds, she was quite ungovernable with delight. In the midst of her caperings, De Torza’s voice was

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heard

heard outside the door, when she instantly pushed Adela through the panel, and throwing a veil over herself, stood the image of despair. He rapped at the door, saying—"Is my daughter ready, Melina?—is she more reconciled?"

"She is almost dressed, and more contented than she was," answered Melina, opening the door a little way; "and we wait only for a priest."

"Confusion catch the convent!" exclaimed De Torza; "what is to be done?"

At this moment Jacobo appeared, accompanied by Francisco, which ended the fears of all, for Jacobo knew not but it was Adela who was to be lighted by Hymen's torch that night. De Torza summoned Murdico to arrange the procession, and went himself to inform the count that all things were ready. Melina called Francisco into the room, thinking it necessary to let him into the secret. The priest was as much pleased
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with the plot as any one present, for reasons which will hereafter appear.

“ But what do you intend to do with the lady Adela?—where will you hide her?” asked Francisco.

“ That is the only thing we have not determined on,” answered Melina: “ where *shall* we put her?”

“ Inside a pillar, which, seemingly, supports this part of the building,” replied Felicia; “ for I was climbing up it the other day to hide some of those books you said I should not read, mother, and fell down and broke my head against it, when a large piece of it came tumbling out; for I afterwards found the pillar was hollow, and the part I had knocked out was made to fit so exactly, that no one could perceive it. Adela will be safer there than in any part of the castle; for even the rage of the don will not find her there.”

To this all present agreed, while Felicia, enveloping herself in Francisco's cloak,

cloak, accompanied by Melina and the trembling Adela, went to deposite her in the pillar. Just as she was stepping in, Murdico came staggering past, with a pitcher of wine in his hand, of which he took some copious draughts. Melina and Felicia concealed themselves on the opposite side, and he, rubbing his eyes, went on. When he was out of sight, Felicia said—"Farewell, my friend Adela; stay there till I am made a countess, and then you shall see me again."

They made the best of their way back to Francisco; and Felicia, throwing off his cloak, had scarcely time to put on her veil, ere a messenger from De Torza came to know the cause of delay.

They set forward, and were met in the hall by eight girls from the village, dressed in white, with baskets of flowers, which they strewed as they went.—Francisco led the procession, and after him, the eight flower-girls, chanting a
national

national bridal anthem, preceded the bride, who, veiled, leaned on the arm of Melina. Next were the female servants of the household, and then the men-servants, Murdico bringing up the rear, who was too much intoxicated to know whether he was at a funeral or a wedding.

The procession was met in the chapel by De Torza and the count, who congratulated each other on their seeming success. The priest, taking his place at the altar, began the ceremony. The count could hardly moderate his joy, and the bride made her responses in a low, tremulous voice ; De Torza, acting as father on the occasion, gave her away. The count signed his name, the bride hers, and then Melina and Juan, the bailiff, as witnesses.

The ceremony being performed, the count drew the bride's arm within his, De Torza supporting her on the other side. As soon as the procession was out

of the chapel, the band, which was composed of the servants of the castle, struck up a lively air, and the flower-girls, throwing away their baskets, put on castanets, and danced before the new-married pair till they came to the door of the saloon, which was beautifully illuminated for the occasion. The party entered, and found every thing which could be prepared, in so short a time, for their entertainment.

De Torza greeted the count as his son-in-law, and taking the hand of the bride, said—"Now I can hail my daughter as a countess!"

"And now I can hail *my* daughter as a countess!" said Melina.

The speech passed as an ebullition of mirth on the joyful occasion, and De Torza asked why she was not present?

"You know her talent for acting," said Melina; "and I thought she would be imitating the priest, or the bride, or
some

some one present, which is the reason you do not see her."

This excuse passed, and all seemed inclined to give way to the gaieties of the scene; when the count, kneeling to his bride, taking her hand, imprinted on it a tender kiss, entreating she would raise her spirits, and unveil.

She granted his request, and drawing her veil aside, fixed all present in mute astonishment. To depict the scene exactly, is impossible. All gazed with eager curiosity—all seemed struck with equal amazement. The count appeared petrified, and deprived of the power to rise from off his knees, representing a fine subject for the sculptor to imitate surprise. De Torza, on the other hand, represented rage alone; his face became purple with passion; and as soon as he could gain utterance, stamping his foot, he cried out—"In the name of all the gods, who are you?"

“ The countess Felicia,” coolly answered the bride.

“ How?—what?—who?” asked De Torza.

“ I am the wife of this gentleman,” said the bride, laying her hand on the count’s shoulder, as he still knelt.

“ Death and furies seize you!” vociferated De Torza; “ how have I been cheated thus?”

“ Listen to me, don,” said Melina, “ and I will tell you. There is an old Spanish adage, which affirms there is no mischief happens without either a woman or a priest in it. Now, in this affair, you have had both; therefore do not wonder if it is complete.”

“ What mean you?” exclaimed her master.

“ Hear me out, and you shall know,” Melina answered.

“ There is no reason for longer parley,” said the count; “ I have been duped!”

He rose, as revenge flashed from his eyes,

eyes, which were generally concealed by the dark brows that shaded them; his lip quivered with defiance, and the pallid hue of his countenance plainly spoke the malignity of his intentions, as he added—"I have been duped by the man who calls himself my *friend*—by one who loudly talks of *honour*!"

“ *I* have not deceived you ; I myself am the dupe,” replied De Torza.

“ It is false !” said the count ; “ you and your servants are leagued together : but here, on this spot, I will have satisfaction ; therefore, draw !”

He unsheathed his sword; De Torza drew his; Felicia threw herself on the shoulder of the count, and fainted. Melina placed herself before De Torza, who seized her by the throat, and pinned her against the wall, saying—"Where, where is my daughter?"

“Villain!” said Melina, as soon as she could speak, “now I will expose you!—Attend to me, count, for a few mo-

ments, and I will inform you of something you do not yet know. Adela, this proud man's daughter, loathed the sight of you; Felicia did not object to you; and I thought it no harm to do the best I could for my child, by giving you one girl instead of the other, and let you marry Felicia."

Murdico staggered up, saying—"If he has married Felicia, he will find her a block of marble; for I will swear I saw her turned into a stone pillar about ten minutes before we went into the chapel!"

A blow from De Torza laid him quiet, and the count desired Melina to proceed.

"What I have to add is this," she continued: "don De Torza was ignorant of the cheat, and you are ignorant that you have, notwithstanding, married a daughter of De Torza's. Felicia is his child as well as mine."

De Torza let go Melina, heaping curses on her head; and extending his
hand

hand to the count, asked if he would exonerate him?

The count seemed perplexed how to act; he was convinced De Torza had no hand in the deception. Felicia still hung lifeless on his shoulder: she was six months younger than Adela, and was pretty, though her beauty was not of that rich, fascinating cast, as was Adela's. He took the hand of De Torza, and giving Felicia to her mother, the gentlemen retired to confer in private.

Francisco assisted Melina to carry her daughter to her apartment, where Felicia, finding there were no observers, started from her fainting fit, which was only assumed, saying—"Now, mother, your daughter is a countess!" She threw Francisco's cloak over her, declaring she must fly to visit her pretty bird in the marble cage. She hastened to the spot, coughed, and was answered by a sigh from within.—"It is the countess Felicia," she whispered, taking the piece out
of

of the pillar, "come to set you free; for I have fettered the count in the chains of wedlock."

"Heaven for ever bless you!" replied Adela: "may I never forget the kindness you have this day done me! But how—oh, how shall I be screened from my father's rage!"

Felicia bade her leave that to her, and Melina by this time arrived at the spot with refreshments for her poor prisoner, as she called Adela, who, at the earnest entreaty of the bride, took a little wine.

Adela would have been suffocated for want of air, had not the pillar been ornamented at the top with carved work, which admitted air sufficient through the interstices.—"My mother—my dear, unfortunate mother," sighed Adela—"what are her feelings all this time, though she is ignorant of the transactions of the last twelve hours!"

"Do be quiet, you poor moping bird in your cage," said Felicia; "for I hear
the

the melodious voices of your father and my turtle-dove; so once more adieu. I will return to you as soon as opportunity offers." She fled quickly to her mother's apartment, and throwing herself on the sofa, was yawning, as if languidly coming to herself, when the count tapped at the door, and asked after his bride.

Melina desired him to enter, saying, it depended on him whether the countess lived or not. He, contrary to expectation, endeavoured to sooth her, while she, bursting into tears, bewailed her folly and imprudence, in fixing her affections on a stranger, and in clandestinely giving her hand to one who could only repay her love with hatred.

The vanity of the count was gratified in being beloved by a pretty girl, who was young enough to be his granddaughter; and he seemed more inclined to act the lover than the disappointed husband. After making her many fine promises, he said he could not for the
present

present spend much time with her, being obliged to quit the castle in about two hours, to begin his journey that night, which was of the utmost importance, and would not admit of delay ; at the same time desiring to know what was become of Adela.

Though the countess was inconsolable at the idea of a separation, she steadily refused to betray Adela, saying, she did not deny knowing where she was, but would not expose her to the rage of her father.

The count seemed mortified at this refusal, and after trying his utmost to shake her resolution, went to inform De Torza of his ill success, who returned with him, swearing he would make those who had concealed his daughter give her up, or repent.

“ My dear don,” said Felicia, “ moderate your anger ; for I assure you it is in vain that you rave at me ; you know I am so accustomed to your rages, they take

take no effect on me. I promise, when you are in a fit state to see your daughter, she shall not be withheld from you; but I cannot be so much her enemy, as to put her in your power now."

De Torza threatened, but she interrupted him, saying—"Recollect, I am a married woman, and not now the mad-cap of the castle, but the countess Felicia!"

The count smiled; and De Torza vowed he would find his daughter that night, and ran out of the room sword in hand, followed by the count. They left no apartment in the castle unsearched, not even the vaults where the dead were deposited; and, as a last hope, they imprudently rushed into the presence of Elvira, demanding the lost Adela. Terror seized the heart of Elvira at their request; but looking the count in the face, she gave a piercing shriek, and fainted. Annette coming in to know the cause, was little better than her mistress;

tress; and De Torza now began to repent his rashness. Leaving the mistress and the maid to recover each other, they searched the rest of the apartments appropriated to Elvira, but no Adela could be found. Dispirited and chagrined, they returned and gave up the search, though in going to the vaults, they had twice passed the pillar which contained the half-expiring Adela.

Felicia laughed at the count, and playfully told him, that now he was an old married man, he must learn to bear contradiction, which was one of the ingredients used to support a married life; for it was not her intention to spoil him, and she had begun as she meant to go on; but the better he bore disappointment, the less he should have of it.

He could not help smiling at his promised felicity; and having staid till the time fixed for his departure, took his leave, and quitted the castle of Toledo.

De Torza, vexed and fatigued, retired
to

to his chamber, Felicia having promised he should see Adela when he was in a better humour. The countess hastened to release her captive in the pillar, saying, "Now I will repay you for your long imprisonment."

She handed Adela out of the pillar, and stepping in herself, took hold of an iron ring, which till that moment had been unobserved by Adela, and lifted up a trap-door. A flight of narrow, dark, stone steps was under the trap. Extending her hand to Adela, Felicia helped her in again, and taking up her lamp, replaced the piece in the pillar; then descending the steps, invited her companion to follow, who hesitatingly looking down the dark abyss, asked where it led to.

Felicia jocosely replied—"It leads to the abodes of dead men's bones, to the dwelling-place of hobgoblins, *if there be any*, and likewise to a place that will so
delight

delight you, it will be difficult to make you leave it."

"I pray you do not jest at such a time as this," said Adela, "for my harassed spirits will not long support me, if you lead me down this dismal lone descent."

"Follow me," said Felicia, laughing, as she quickly disappeared.

Adela's fears increased on missing her guide, and she called her back, entreating not to be left alone.

Felicia returned, held up her lamp, desiring her friend to take the fatal leap, adding—"It is not half so formidable as the one I took in the chapel to-night, when I jumped into Hymen's chains."

The fact was, the steps were in some places broken away, owing to the damp, which Felicia being aware of, gave a spring, and was out of sight in a moment.

Adela was compelled to follow, and soon stood beside her companion. They proceeded but slowly, owing to the decayed

cayed state of the steps, being frequently obliged to jump where they were not sufficiently firm to bear them. Felicia had travelled this way so often, she could tell her young friend where she might step with safety, and where she could not. The staircase terminated in a long, narrow passage, the walls of which were green with the dampness, which pervaded all parts of this dreary place. They continued their walk for a considerable time, till Adela not being much charmed with the prospect, asked if the passage had no termination.

“ It is a long lane that has not one turning, child,” said Felicia, “ and in a few minutes we shall turn out of this.”

They did shortly quit this long, narrow, winding path; but did not turn into a place more desirable, for they were in a large square vault, round which were arranged several coffins. The place appeared to be but seldom cleaned out, and the worms were crawling in numbers

bers beneath their feet, as the lazy snail had glazed the walls with slime. A brisk night breeze blew through a small grating, which made it difficult to keep their lamp from being extinguished.

“ This,” said Felicia, “ is the resting-place of your ancestors; here ends all their worldly glory—here lies entombed all their pride of birth. This coffin is that of your great-grandfather, falling to pieces from the hand of time; that on the right is your grandfather’s; both noted when alive to be the proudest Spaniards Toledo ever saw; that opposite is *supposed* to be the coffin of don De Torza’s first wife, at least the inscription on the lid tells us so; this small one contains the remains of your infant brother, who was called Orlando. The brother whom you have living now was likewise named Orlando, after the first.”

“ I cannot tell how that is,” observed Adela; “ my mother says she never had but one son, and rather suspects *that one* did

did not die; for if he died, how can he now be alive? She would have ascertained the truth long ago, but never knew where the child was interred."

"Then she is not blessed with my spirit of curiosity," replied Felicia; "for there is not a nook in this spacious building which I have left unexplored; and I am much better acquainted with its intricacies than either the master of it or his men are. That vault on the left is Murdico's burial-place, where the dead are interred with less ceremony than they are here, being thrown in without coffins, or sepulchral rites of any kind.—I will just shew you how they lie."

"I thank you for the offer, but must decline accepting it," Adela answered, "for I would not for the world see such a shocking sight. How long are we to remain here with the dead?"

"No longer than while you admire the beauties of the place," replied Felicia;

lia; "and we will instantly proceed, if your curiosity is satisfied."

"Quite so," said Adela.—"Let us be gone."

"Climb up here then, and place your foot on this coffin," rejoined Felicia.

"Excuse me," answered Adela, "I will not trample on the dead; I cannot step on the remains of my father's first wife, though, it is true, I never knew her."

"I thought your squeamishness would come to this," said Felicia, smiling.—"Do you suppose the lady will rise up and scold you?"

"Do not jest in such a place as this," Adela replied; "I have no fears of the dead, but almost venerate their ashes."

"Then you sometimes venerate a parcel of rubbish," said Felicia, "which I will soon convince you of. The first time I visited this place, I examined every corner, to see if I could find any secret outlet; and at last I scrutinized
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the ceiling, and thought I perceived something different in that part over our heads; I climbed up, and stepped on this coffin; but as soon as I set my foot on it, the lid broke, and let me in. I seemed to make such a rumbling amongst the lady's bones, that the moment I could get my foot out, I took my lamp, and peeped in through the hole which I had made, when, to my satisfaction, I saw the coffin contained nothing but stones!—Now look in, and be convinced."

Adela obeyed, and was satisfied. The broken part she did not observe before, because the coffin was placed above her on a large stone slab.

Felicia giving her lamp to her companion, ascended first, then standing on the coffin, placed her hands and head against the ceiling, and pushed up a trap-door, when taking the lamp from Adela, assisted her to mount, and springing up, forced herself through the aperture, and stooping down, helped to pull Adela

after her. Felicia closed the trap, and asked her companion if she liked this part of the castle better than the vault they had quitted. Adela saw but little to admire here, for they were in what originally used to be the armory, but which had not been entered, except by Felicia, for a number of years. The dust which had collected on the arms seemed to indicate they had not been disturbed for half a century. They were passing on, when Adela took hold of Felicia's arm, saying—"Stop, observe the suit of armour placed in the niche opposite to us—it has moved twice; do not laugh, for I am confident I am not mistaken!—I do not fear the dead, but am afraid some living person has concealed themselves in it."

"We will soon know," said Felicia, "the visor is open, and we can peep down into it.—Will you lift me up to look into it, or shall I lift you up?"

Felicia being the strongest, held Ade-
la

la in her arms, who ventured to look in, and saw a sight which repaid her—a pair of beautiful doves had built their nest there, secure from the hand of man.—“ Sweet emblems of innocence,” said Adela, “ lovely natives of my country, here in peace remain—I will not harm you.”

“ So then these are the living creatures who concealed themselves—these are the hobgoblins who made you start!” said Felicia. “ Whenever I find your courage flag, I shall remind you of the spirits of the armour.”

She burst into a hearty laugh, which echo seemed to mock at the farthest end of the place they were in. Adela’s spirits grew lighter as they travelled on. When quitting the armory, they stopped at an iron door, which seemed irresistibly closed against them. Felicia strove in vain to draw the ponderous bolts, which resisted all her efforts.—“ It is not long,” she said, “ since I passed

this way in some of my wild rambles over the unfrequented parts of the castle, and these bolts always yielded to my strength; but the fixed rainy seasons of our country have happened since, and rusted them; now as I have acted the part of many a general in this same armory, and always fancied myself victorious, I must not suffer a little rust to impede my progress."

So saying, she took some oil out of her lamp, and applied it to the bolt, which presently yielded to her wish; and a small winding stone staircase was all that was to be seen, which they began to ascend. Being arrived at the top, they were in a narrow stone corridor, opening at the opposite end into a small chapel, which seemed to have remained as long unnoticed as the armory they had just left. The ornaments of the chapel had in all probability been removed, as there was nothing remaining but the altar, a crucifix, and a few cushions.

cushions. The grey light of morn had just shot through the painted window over the altar, as Adela knelt, and invoked the aid of Heaven for the support of her mother. Felicia crossed herself, and became serious for a moment, as she had been bred a Catholic by Melina and father Francisco. .

Adela rising from her knees, felt renovated as she followed her guide, who turned into the north aisle, and stooping down by the shrine of St. Magdalene, drew back a low stone door, which had an inscription in Latin on it, so as to have the appearance of a monument ; behind this, there was not any thing to be seen but a wooden panel, carved in a most Gothic manner.

“ Is this all you have brought me here to see ?” Adela demanded with chagrin.

Felicia smiling, touched a secret spring ; the panel opened, Adela shrieked, and sprang into the arms of Elvira.

“ Child !—mother !” burst from the lips

of each ; joy, mingled with grief, choked all further utterance, while tears spoke the plainer language of the heart.

Felicia still leaning against the panel, stood a silent spectatress of the rich excess of feeling joy she had herself contrived ; and wrapped in the delight of giving unexpected pleasure to others, felt this the happiest moment of her life.

When the strong feelings of Elvira would allow her to speak, she said to her daughter—" To what blessed cause do I owe the bliss of clasping thee once more ?"

Adela, taking the hand of Felicia, who till that moment remained unobserved, replied—" It is to this kind creature our thanks are due ; this dear young friend has effected more than all the world had power to do."

Elvira warmly embraced Felicia, letting fall the grateful tears she could not repress on her cheek, as she said—" In the name of wonder, who and what art thou,

thou, to whom I stand so much indebted?"

"I am," replied Felicia, "the plaything of don De Torza, the merry-Andrew of the castle, the scarecrow of Murdico, the countess Felicia, and the friend of Adela."

Elvira threw her arms round this extraordinary young person, pressed her closely to her heart, saying—"May the great God himself reward her who has thus befriended my child!"

"You talk," said Felicia, "as if the joy was all your own: do you suppose, lady, I do not come in for my share?"

"Yes, yes," replied Elvira, "the pleasure of bestowing happiness is as great to the giver as to the receiver. Wilt thou allow me, dear young stranger, to adopt thee as my second daughter?"

"With gratitude," answered Felicia; "though I can only spare you half my heart, for I have a mother, who is one of the simple dames of unsophisticated na-

ture, that has a right to claim the other half."

"Sweet child of affection," exclaimed Elvira, "where hast thou been reared? Thy language bespeaks thee well informed."

"I have wildly grown amidst the unfrequented parts of your castle," replied Felicia, "where it has been my delight to roam, and have discovered all the secret traps and panels of the building, which has enabled me to bring the lady Adela and you together now. What little I know I am self-taught, having gathered all my information from the books of don De Torza's library."

"You mentioned your mother," said Elvira—"have you no father?"

"None, lady, who will own me," answered Felicia.

"God help thee!" exclaimed Elvira, musing. "You just now called yourself a countess; is it possible so young a creature can be married?"

"Yes,

“ Yes, lady,” said Felicia, “ I had the honour of being married about four hours ago, to the gentleman who came here with don De Torza in search of Adela.”

“ To *him*!—no, surely not to *him*!” said Elvira, with agitation.

“ Even to *him*,” replied Felicia.

“ Unfortunate victim!” sighed Elvira.

“ Not very unfortunate,” said Felicia, “ for a poor girl to be suddenly made into a countess. Do you know the count, my husband?”

“ I never knew him as a *count*,” Elvira answered; “ but I have known him as—I will not tell thee what, lest I should destroy that happy delusion thou art wrapped in!”

“ Ah, mother,” interrupted Adela, “ think what I owe my young friend, who miraculously stepped into my place, and married the count instead of I!”

“ Instead of thee, child!” is it possible De Torza intended to unite his
H 5 daughter

daughter to that inexplicable character?" demanded Elvira with vehemence.

Adela and Felicia informed Elvira of all the circumstances relative to the marriage, and the cheat which had been put upon De Torza and the count, in Felicia personating Adela to such perfection, that the discovery was not made too soon.

Elvira again embraced Felicia, saying — "A thousand, thousand blessings attend thee! oh, mayest thou never live to repent so rash an action!"

"Fear not for me," said Felicia, smiling; "for if the count does not know how to make a good husband, I shall soon teach him."

"Happy state of sanguine youth!" sighed Elvira: "may the fond wishes of thy warm heart be realized!"

The door opened, and Annette entered, who seeing her young mistress so unexpectedly, was near fainting, till the affectionate kiss Adela imprinted on her cheek, assured her what she saw was reality.

reality. The faithful creature had sat up all night with her distracted mistress, who spent the time in bewailing the loss of Adela, and had only left the apartment to prepare a medicine, which the pitiable state of Elvira required.

Adela introduced her to Felicia, whom she called her preserver, when Felicia told them she was no stranger to them all; for in the dusk of night she had frequently left her lamp in the corridor, at the other end of the chapel, had opened the stone door, then the panel a little way, and had been an unknown silent witness of their griefs and joys.

The glowing tints of a rising sun were gilding the window of Elvira's apartment, when Felicia reminded her young friend it was time to return.

"So soon," said Adela, "must I leave this happy spot so soon?"

"Did I not tell you," asked Felicia, laughing, "when you was tumbling down the dark stone steps, that they led

to a place so truly delightful, you would be loath to leave it?"

"Little did I think of the happiness you had in store for me," Adela answered; "teach me how to part with my incomparable mother!" at the same time resting her head on the bosom of Elvira.

"We part to meet again, my child," said her mother; "summon that resolution I know thee to be possessed of, and go—May God go with thee!" Adela kneeled on one side, and Felicia on the other, as Elvira added—"Father of mercies, protect these my children!" Then pointing to the panel, bathed them with her tears; but could speak no more, being overcome by her maternal feelings; while Felicia taking the hand of Adela, led her through the aperture; then fastening the panel, and closing the monumental door, drew the arm of her companion through hers.

Adela breaking from her, went up to the altar, and gratefully poured forth the
thankfulness

thankfulness of her full heart, to that Power whose goodness shone through all his works: for to Him she attributed every blessing she enjoyed, not forgetting this last great consolation, an interview with her beloved mother. She arose composed, and pressing the hand of Felicia, said—"Remember, from henceforth you are my sister."

Adela knew not that they were related by the father's side; for Melina had particularly desired Felicia to keep that circumstance a secret. They retraced their way back; but when Adela came to the armory, she could not help loitering a few moments, to peep at the beautiful doves in the suit of armour, which before had so much alarmed her. They hastened on without any thing to impede their progress, till they came to the first flight of steps, at the bottom of the pillar, which were not so easy to ascend as they were to jump down; but Felicia, who was never at a loss, placed
some

some of the loose stones for them to climb up, and they arrived safe at their journey's end.

The two wanderers retired to Felicia's apartment, where Melina in impatient anxiety was waiting for them. Adela shared Felicia's bed; but her busy mind reviewed every occurrence of the last twelve hours, fraught with so much consequence to herself, which drove the lazy god from off her eyelids, for hers was a mind too feelingly alive to joy or sorrow to bow obedience to his drowsy influence. Not so Felicia, who possessed less nerve, and consequently was more to be envied. She soon yielded to the soft pressure of the arms of Somnus, who strewed his poppies over her senses; for not even the thoughts of being a countess could keep her any longer awake. Adela earnestly entreated Melina not to leave the room, who threw herself on a sofa, and followed the example of her daughter.

Two hours passed, when some one knocked at the door. Adela trembled, but dared not speak. A second rap, louder than the first, soon followed. Adela gently called Melina, but could not rouse her. The person then thundered at the door so violently as to burst it open, and in walked De Torza.—“Woman,” said he, to Melina, “tell me instantly where my daughter is, or I will blow you to destruction!”

“Bestow your threats on those who mind them,” retorted Melina, rising and rubbing her eyes; “what is all this noise for at such an hour? You think because you never sleep yourself, that other people are to do without likewise.”

“Where is Adela?” vociferated De Torza.

“There,” replied Melina, pointing to the bed.

He drew aside the gauze curtain, looked for some time at Adela, whose terror shook the bed, then turning to
Melina,

Melina, said—"Why did not you let me know before where she was?"

"Because," answered Melina, "I would not put a timid dove into the talons of a raging tiger."

"Do not be so much alarmed, Adela," said he, without noticing Melina's companion; "notwithstanding your disobedience, I wished to know you were safe."

"It is very strange," observed Felicia, yawning, "that a countess cannot have a few hours repose, but her room is to be forced open by those who ought to guard it."

"The insolence of you and your mother will ruin Adela," replied De Torza: "she must rise and be *my* companion."

"Then you will have a corpse to keep you company," Melina remarked; "for you have frightened all life out of her!"

This was nearly the case; for Adela could support herself no longer, and had
fainted

fainted from excess of feeling. She dreaded to meet De Torza again, for having dared to act contrary to his wish in not giving her hand to the count, whose person she loathed; and her father had presented himself so unexpectedly, it was more than she had strength to bear.

De Torza said, no father was plagued with such a perverse daughter as he was; for she had resolution enough to disobey him, and then must apparently die with fright, when he only wanted to ascertain if she was alive. Then flinging out of the apartment, told Melina to pay her every necessary attention.

It was some time before she was restored to herself, and in a faint voice asked if her father was in the room? On being answered in the negative, she became less agitated, but said she felt extremely ill. The various occurrences of the preceding day were too much for her, being formed as she was, a stranger
to

to indifference; every sentiment of her rich mind was accompanied with a vivid, excessive sensibility, which rendered her happiness or misery intense. She envied alike the intrepidity of Melina, and the gay flow of spirits of Felicia, but could not imitate what she would so gladly have possessed.

Melina endeavoured to sooth her, by saying—"Do not fret, child; your tyrannical father is not here now: I wish you feared him as little as my Filly does."

"Pray, mother," said her daughter, "remember I am not *Filly* now, but the countess Felicia!"

"Well, my pretty countess," said her mother, smiling, "I will endeavour to remember your title: however, we must have some assistance for our poor moping bird; and as Paulo is absent from the castle, I shall propose that father Francisco attends in his stead." She went with the melancholy account of Adela's illness

illness to De Torza, proposing her favourite priest should prescribe.

“*Francisco!*” exclaimed De Torza, stamping, “do you think I will place my daughter’s health in the hands of that blundering, bloated priest, who has not studied any thing beyond fat capons and good wine?”

“Bloated priest, forsooth!” said Melina, holding up her hands. “Marry! if it had not been for this same bloated priest, I should have exposed you long ago; but he granted me absolution for the sin of listening, and yielding to the persuasions of your wily tongue, and has kept the secret ever since; therefore how could I do less than make him welcome to the best the castle afforded? Bloated, indeed!”

“I care not who you send for,” replied her master, “if you will but be gone, and take your cursed tongue with you!”

“It never was cursed till it said *yes*
to

to your solicitations," replied Melina, as she left the room.

Melina had gained her point, and sent off immediately for her father confessor, as it had been De Torza's wish, for obvious reasons, she should not confess to Paulo, for many years.

The round shining face of Francisco bore evidence to De Torza's remark, that his chief study was fat capons and good wine, which led many to suppose his feastings were more frequent than his fastings. He had persuaded Melina, that she had expiated her dereliction from virtue, by the many presents she made, through *his* hands, to the monastery of which he was a member; and accordingly granted her absolution, for which indulgence Melina thought she could not be too grateful, and therefore made him a constant, welcome guest, to the good things the castle contained.

It is no uncommon thing for priests to be physicians of the body as well as
of

of the soul, on account of the retired lives they lead, which allows much time for study. Francisco found Adela in a high fever, and prescribed to the best of his judgment. The thought of not being able to pay her mother another secret visit tended to increase her malady, and on the next day she was much worse. De Torza was frequently at his daughter's bedside, with restless inquiries, which still kept alive her agitation, and baffled the power of medicine. Melina could not fathom the cause of his inquietude, though she saw the ill effects it had on her patient; and told him, if he wished his daughter to live, he must keep away.

“ If I *wish* it !” said De Torza : “ she is the only child my pride will let me own, and it is natural to suppose I wish to save her life. Tell her, her refusal to marry the count shall not again be mentioned by me, and that I will not intrude till she wishes to see me.”

This

This consideration was the only remedy Adela stood in need of; and as Felicia had kindly undertaken to visit her mother every evening, the patient began to amend.

The situation of Elvira was truly pitiable, when informed of the illness of her beloved child, who, though under the same roof, yet dared not visit her. Elvira was astonished when Felicia informed her of the lenity of De Torza towards his daughter, and asked if it arose from affection?

“No,” said Felicia, “but from pride. No father in Spain can boast of a child half so lovely as Adela, and on that account he glories in her: her beauty is of that brilliant cast, that it extinguishes all pretensions to it in those around her. I always thought myself pretty till I saw her; but when she is present, I would gladly thrust my head into father Francisco’s cowl, to hide my want of beauty. If I was not married, I should
certainly

certainly quarrel with her for being so very handsome!"

"Go, you gay, ingenuous trifler," said Elvira—"instil a portion of your liveliness into my Adela, and her sufferings will be less."

"At least I will *try* to obey you," replied Felicia, as she closed the panel, and fled on the lightest wings of friendship to the apartment of the invalid.

The buoyant spirits of Felicia tended much to support the drooping Adela; for as she brought news of Elvira every evening, the patient mended so fast, as to be able to sit up on the fourth day, when filial duty whispered that she should request the company of her father. The dictates of prudence were never disregarded by Adela, and she commissioned Melina to signify her wish. De Torza immediately complied, and as he entered, Adela attempted to kneel, saying—"I have much to thank my father
ther

ther for, and hope I shall in future be able to obey him in all things."

De Torza placed her on a sofa, and seating himself by her, said—"On the past, Adela, we will be silent; but with respect to the future, I shall expect what you have just promised. The time will shortly come, when I shall again put your obedience to the test; and, remember, I shall not brook a second refusal." Adela turned pale at the close of his speech, when he added—"For the present, try to regain your health, as much still depends upon you; for as I have but *one* child, of course I draw on that *one* for all my happiness."

The gentle heart of Adela was wounded; she burst into tears, and kissed her father's hand, saying, it would be her greatest joy to secure his felicity.

"Time will prove the sincerity of that assertion," replied De Torza, as he left the room.

"What in the name of all the saints,"
said

said Melina, "is he going to do with the poor child now? She is no sooner raised from the grave, than he is trying to thrust her into it again! Well, of all the tyrants that ever lived, may St. Magdalene defend me from him!"

"Perhaps," said Adela, "my father's next command may be more reasonable."

"No, child, do not expect it," rejoined Melina; "for he never knew what reason was, because his pride has driven him mad! Oh, if I was the lady Elvira, I would tear his two eyes out! But do not fret; as soon as you are able you shall go and see her, accompanied by Filly."

"By the countess Felicia, you mean, mother," observed her daughter.

"Yes, yes, you know what I mean, Filly," replied Melina.

"Not *Filly* again!" said the young bride.

"Well, I will try to remember my

Felicia is a countess," Melina promised ;
" but I do feel so for this poor child,
and her saint of a mother, that it makes
me forget myself."

" But you have assured me I shall see
that saint of a mother, and that is the
greatest balm you could administer to us
both," said Adela.

The sweet thought of once more seeing her beloved mother tranquillized the spirits of this amiable girl, and prevented her having a relapse, which Melina had anticipated. There are few characters so perfect, but they have in them some evil ; and few so base, but they have in them some good. Melina, it is true, had been guilty of an aberration from the path of virtue ; but could that fault have been dipped in Lethe, Melina was not without her amiable qualities : she was ever ready to shelter the oppressed, and no threat could intimidate her from telling the tyrant when he was wrong. She had been a sufferer
by

by her haughty master, who despised her as soon as he had succeeded to his wish; but having a tolerable share of spirit, found it best to set him at defiance; and under these circumstances, Melina naturally pitied those who were in his power. Fortunately she was not De Torza's wife, therefore in his opinion she was too insignificant to confine.

Adela daily gathered strength, and was impatient for the promised visit; but her careful nurse, Melina, was fearful the damp of the passages, or vaults, would affect her patient, and for several days withheld her consent. Adela felt, and acknowledged her kind attention; while Elvira admired and esteemed a woman who, though in the common walk of life, had so essentially befriended her child.

At last the wished-for moment arrived, when Adela, enveloped in one of Melina's large shawls, attended by her friend Felicia, entered her favourite pil-
lar,

lar, leaped down the broken flight of steps with the agility of an antelope, swiftly ran through the damp, dark, subterraneous passages, outstripped her companion, and sprang upon the very coffin she before objected to set her foot on: but here she was obliged to stop, not having strength enough to force up the trap-door above her. Felicia overtook her, and laughing jocosely, said—"You was more fearful of disturbing the supposed remains of the first lady De Torza when we passed this way before! Shame on you, light girl! how can you spring on the coffin of the deceased with so much levity?"

"Shame on such a provoking creature as *you*," replied Adela, "to tantalize one in my situation! Be quick, and let me proceed."

"Forward then," said Felicia, touching the spring; and Adela was out of sight in a moment. Not even her doves could attract a glance, and she was leaning
ing

ing breathless against the shrine of St. Magdalene, when Felicia again came up with her.—“ This is your last impediment,” observed Felicia, as she opened the stone door; “ nothing remains but the opening this panel, and then——”

“ And *then* I shall embrace my mother,” replied Adela, as she darted through.

Elvira once more clasped her child, and loaded Felicia with acknowledgments; but it is impossible to describe such a meeting as this, where parental and filial affection triumphed over all calamity: the ecstasy of such an interview can be but faintly imagined.

After some moments of luxury, Elvira was shocked at the alteration illness had made in her beloved girl, though her spirits were at a higher tone than usual; and Felicia endeavoured to dissipate the anxiety so visible in the countenance of Elvira, by saying—“ Never fear, lady, our invalid’s strength is in part restored ;

for she sped here with the swiftness of Mercury, while such an old married woman as myself could not keep pace with her !”

Half an hour was passed by Elvira, Adela, and Annette, in the tender exchange of sincere affection, when Felicia reminded them it would be dangerous to prolong the visit.—“ Not,” she remarked, “ that the don, or his man, could follow us; for they do not know half as much of the intricacies of this building as I do; but we had better not stay till we are missed, lest we create suspicion.”

“ Once more I commit my treasure into your hands,” said Elvira; “ but know not how I shall make you amends.”

“ My charge will be very high,” Felicia observed.

“ Name it,” said Elvira.

“ Your esteem,” was the answer.

“ You have it, and every grateful feeling I am possessed of,” said Elvira:

“ yet

“ yet what a poor return for the services you have rendered us !”

“ We have not time to talk of poverty or riches,” replied Felicia, kissing the hand of Elvira, which she had held some time within hers. Adela threw her arms round her mother’s neck, gave her a hearty kiss, and promising to return as soon as prudence would permit, followed her young friend. They reached Melina’s apartment without molestation, and passed several weeks in comparative happiness, which was increased by their evening excursions, as often as they thought their absence would not be perceived.

By De Torza’s order, Adela always dined with him, and spent the remainder of each day in conversing with, or reading to him. His urbanity to her at this time perplexed every one, while Adela’s warm heart readily admitted that general deceiver, *hope*, and fancied De Torza was not without parental re-

gard for her: even Elvira thought it might be possible; Felicia alone was a sceptic. She penetrated deeper into his intentions, and affirmed that he had some hidden point to gain, which in time would be brought to light.

De Torza one day asked Adela, why she had not requested to see her mother?

“Because,” answered Adela, “when my father thinks proper, he will let me see her without my requesting it.”

“True,” replied De Torza; “I intend you to see her now.” He, rising, led Adela to the left wing of the castle, but not by the way she had lately gone on her stolen visits.

Elvira heard the key of the outward door of her residence turn, with a palpitating heart; for she knew De Torza was coming; but was agreeably surprised when she saw Adela leaning on his arm; and soon as she could command her feelings, said—“Oh, De Torza, what return
shall

shall I make you for this unexpected kindness?"

"Teach your daughter obedience, madam, and I shall be amply repaid," was the answer.

"I am certain our Adela will not intentionally disobey her father," said Elvira.

"That she *will* not, depends upon *you*," replied De Torza; "that she *has*, was my own fault! I am not come here to speak of the past, but of the future: it is my intention that she shall marry, and that she shall marry those I have chosen. Be it your part to teach her to comply; for by all the infernal powers I swear, if she again thwarts my purpose ——"

"Hold!" said Elvira, "nor finish so rash a sentence. Perhaps the person you proposed to her before did not——"

"Did not suit her *fancy*," De Torza added.

"May I know who this person was?" asked Elvira.

"You saw him frequently many years ago," answered De Torza; "and you likewise saw him on the night I intended her to marry him, when she had hid herself; and he came here with me in search of her."

"To *him*!" exclaimed Elvira—"you certainly did not intend to unite your daughter to *him*!"

"I certainly did," replied De Torza; "and took care you should not prejudice her mind against him, by knowing of the match beforehand. She did not refuse him from knowing who or what he was, but because he was not *handsome* enough for her."

"No!" said Elvira—"that was not the reason; but it was because she inherited her mother's antipathy."

"My father," said Adela, kneeling, "fear me not a second time; you cannot *now* propose any one I shall object to."

"As

“As to your *objections*, they shall not oppose my *will*,” De Torza answered. “For the present, I leave you with your mother; and whenever I choose you to marry, if it is to *Satan himself*, I shall not expect your refusal!”

He left them, but left them overwhelmed with fearful apprehensions: who the person could be that he intended Adela to be united to, they could not guess.—“At any rate I am safe from the count; for my gay, spirited friend, Felicia, has for ever secured him to herself,” said Adela. “But whoever it is, he may have my hand, but can never have my heart; that is irrevocably fixed on my mother and some one else.”

“My Adela,” said Elvira, shedding tears, “we are doomed to weep over the fate of each other! yet I must exhort you not to let the ties of consanguinity interfere with your future peace. You *must* (remember it is *I* who say you
I 6 *must*),

must), in the article of marriage, obey your father."

"If it is my mother's wish, however disgusting the object, she need not fear my compliance," replied Adela. "I had entertained the hope of never entering the married state, and wished to live solely for the comfort of those I love; but this young blossom of felicity seems nipped in the bud, and I am ready to sacrifice myself to my father's will."

A visit in the evening from Felicia, helped to dissipate their despondency; for she was anxious to know what was to be done with her young friend. She was highly diverted at the gloom which overspread the countenance of Adela, on the thoughts of becoming a wife, saying — "Well, I cannot help you out of another matrimonial hobble, because the law will not allow me; therefore you must take the next gentleman on your own hands: all I can do is, to condole with, or laugh at you, and teach you to perform

perform the part of a bride with a good grace ; for example, you must not pull such a long face as you do now ; but must have a smiling lip, a blushing cheek, a trembling hand, a downcast eye, a timid deportment, which will all say to your happy bridegroom *go*, though in fact they will whisper *come*."

" Your inexhaustible flow of spirits makes me smile, in spite of my dismal prospects," Adela observed. " I wonder you are not uneasy, lest the count should not esteem a wife who is not of his own choosing."

" He would have greater cause of uneasiness if he *had* had the wife of his choice," said Felicia ; " for though I did not violently *love* him before marriage, having never seen him, yet I did not perfectly *hate* him, as his chosen one did ; and I think my youth a sufficient equivalent for fortune, as he is old enough to be my grandfather. He has, though unintentionally, given me a claim to his
title

title and effects, which claim I have spirit enough to put in full force, should his future conduct require it: and now, my timid friend, where am I to find cause of uneasiness?"

"May the thick veil your fancy has woven never be torn from your eyes!" said Elvira, embracing her: "my wish for your happiness is equalled only by that for Adela's."

"Fear not for me, lady," replied Felicia; "you shall see the count will find he has a gay wife, whose spirit cannot be depressed by all the powers of fortune. Farewell! you shall see me every evening, and know what occurs beyond the limits of your part of the castle." She closed the panel with a smile, leaving her astonished friends to descant on the liveliness of her character.

Some weeks were passed by Elvira and her daughter in uninterrupted felicity, which was heightened by the constant

stant visits of Felicia, whose gaiety remained undiminished.

As she was returning from one of these secret expeditions, she perceived an unusual bustle in the castle, and leaning over the grand staircase, found it was occasioned by the arrival of the count. She flew to welcome him; but was struck to see him ill, emaciated, enfeebled, unable to alight from off his mule, having come without attendants, and apparently more dead than alive.

De Torza himself went to his assistance, and to the many questions Felicia asked the count, he faintly answered, he had been attacked by bravoës, who had slain his servants, and he had barely escaped with his life.

Felicia was shocked to see the visible alteration in him, and, for the first time in her life, felt uneasy, as it was natural for her to feel for all those who suffered.

He was conveyed to bed, and surgical assistance sent for. Francisco being the nearest,

nearest, immediately attended by the desire of Melina ; but was not permitted to enter the wounded man's chamber by De Torza, who sent for the best surgeon in Toledo, who gave it as his opinion that the chief danger was in a fracture of the right arm of the count, which most probably must be amputated.

Felicia begged to attend as chief nurse ; but was peremptorily refused by De Torza, who ordered her to keep out of the count's sight, till he expressed a wish to see her, as the least agitation might be fatal to him.

A nurse was procured from a distance, who was a stranger to all parties ; yet Felicia contrived to meet her a little distance from the castle. The woman was of forbidding countenance, remarkably dark complexion, and, to add peculiar grace to her figure, was humpbacked. De Torza permitted no one to see the count, except the surgeon, the nurse, and Murdico. Felicia obeyed the wish
of

of De Torza, by keeping entirely out of the way, and contented herself by frequently sending to inquire if her husband amended.

The count was in constant agony, while the surgeon urged the necessity of amputation; but the patient was unwilling to consent. A high fever was the effect of his sufferings, and delirium often seized him.

The nurse was unremitting in her attentions; and in one of his lucid intervals, said, she had seen worse cases than his cured without taking off the limb; for having attended in hospitals, she had had large experience, and if he would allow her to prescribe, she would be bound to save the arm. The count eagerly caught at her offer, and the surgeon was dismissed with handsome recompence. The nurse applied her remedies, the pain decreased, the fever abated, and delirium totally subsided. De Torza praised her skill, the count called her his preserver, and

and loaded her with benefits. In a short time the splintered parts of the bone came away, when he might be said to be in a fair way of recovery. The count engaged her to attend him as long as she lived, vowing never to trust his life in any other hands than hers.

He was now able to converse with De Torza, who, as well as himself, was not under their accustomed reserve before the nurse, whom they considered as one of their party, she having no relations, and had agreed to spend the rest of her life in the service of the count.

Felicia sometimes visited her friends in the left wing, and informed them of what she knew; but being anxious to observe all that passed, her visits were not so frequent as usual. It was now found necessary that the nurse should have occasional rest, when Melina was ordered to prepare an apartment for her, and at these times her place was supplied by Murdico.

Affairs

Affairs stood thus, when Orlando arrived at the castle, and gained an entrance into the left wing, inhabited by Elvira and Adela, by means of a small rope ladder. Annette had written to him, fearing her young mistress would be made miserable for life, by uniting herself to those whom De Torza should point out; and at the earnest entreaty of this attached servant, Paulo agreed to send the letter by a private hand to Madrid, as he was at that time obliged to be absent from the castle on particular business for his friend the abbot, which would occasion him to go across the country the contrary way.

Orlando, on receiving this letter, instantly left the Escorial at Madrid for the castle of Toledo, where he arrived with little interruption, save his meeting with his much-admired friend Regolio in the forest, who gave him the rope ladder, with which he gained an entrance into Elvira's garden.

After

After his arrival, when their tumultuous feelings would permit, he related to his mother and Adela, at their earnest request, every circumstance which happened to him at the court of Spain, and spoke with ardour of his having more than once saved the life of their beloved sovereign from the poniard of his unknown enemy.

“ I think I know that enemy,” exclaimed Elvira, “ and have known him for years ! Annette too must remember him. It was to this monster your father would have sacrificed our Adela ! ”

“ Is it possible ? ” asked Orlando. “ Much as I have disapproved the conduct of don De Torza, yet I could not suppose his avarice would have led him to such a step as this. What ! was the beauteous blossom my mother and I have cultivated with so much care, to have been blasted with the pestiferous breath of that Colossus of villany ? ”

The rage of Orlando rose high, as he
paced

paced the room in agitation, at the thought that his loved Adela should be cast away upon an object so unworthy of her, though he knew not for certainty who that object was ; and asked, by what means the match was prevented, when the panel opened, and Felicia stood before him.

“ Who are you ?” he exclaimed, “ that comes thus unbidden, and from whence ?”

“ Don Orlando,” said she, addressing him, “ the pleasure of seeing you so unexpectedly, is more than I can express, being certain you can essentially serve us all. You seem surprised at my familiarity ; but this is not the first time I have seen you by many ; for when you resided with your father, I was seldom far from you, though, by his orders, I never let you see me ; and I was the happy means of saving your life, when the don and you had some words respecting a *certain proposal* he made you, the horror of which struck you senseless at his

his feet. Supposing you really dead, he ordered Murdico to carry you to *his* vault, who threw you in so unceremoniously, that the blood gushed profusely from your mouth. I was in the vault at that moment, whither I had fled to hide myself, on hearing Murdico coming, little supposing his business would direct him to the same spot, for I was then taking one of my subterraneous rambles. He threw you in with such violence, that he knocked me down, and seeing I was in a moment covered with blood, I shrieked out, and Murdico supposing me to be the spirit of some one of the bodies in the vault, stood immovably fixed. I saw when I got up that the blood flowed from you instead of me, and raising you, perceived you still lived. I shook Murdico by the shoulder, and was some minutes in convincing him I was not an apparition ; but when he found I was nothing more than flesh and blood, he bestowed many an ugly epithet on me
for

for being there. I insisted he should carry you back, or I threatened to call all the servants in the castle to your assistance. He complied, grumbling hard enough, and I promised to be silent on the subject, as he did not wish his master to know I was in the secret; for Murdico thought I had found a key belonging to the vaults, which he had lost in one of his fits of inebriety."

Elvira embraced her, saying—"You are the preserver of both my children!"

Adela threw her arms round Felicia's neck, exclaiming—"I know not which I love you most for—my brother's life, or my liberty!—Orlando, you must love this dear young creature *almost* as sincerely as you do me."

"What mysterious being are you," he demanded, "who has so essentially served me and my family?"

"I am," replied Felicia, "a child without a father, a countess without a claim to title, a wife without a husband! Save my

my simple mother, none else will own me."

"But they shall own you, if my aid can force them," said Orlando. "Where is your husband?"

"In the castle, now on a visit to your father," Felicia answered; "and it is in consequence of overhearing part of their conversation, that I am come here to entreat your mother and sister to go to a concealed spot, where I shall direct, that they may hear and judge for themselves, for there is something more on foot than I can communicate."

Orlando objected to Adela going on such an expedition, lest she should hear or see any thing which might too seriously affect her; but she begged that, let things be as bad as they would, she might know the worst; and Orlando at last reluctantly yielded, provided that he was to be of the party.

"That is what I wished to propose," said Felicia, "as I want your opinion.

To-morrow

To-morrow night the subject is to be renewed, for the gentlemen differed so widely when they conversed about it to-day, that each consented to leave it till then. I must confess I thought my husband the most unreasonable of the two. I propose you to go into my mother's room, for the count's apartment joins it, where there is a communication, known only to my mother and me, which consists of the very panel Adela saw me jump through the day she was to have been united to the count; and I dare say she had, at that moment, no doubt of my being insane, for I was acting the part of Alexander the Great. Behind this panel, I mean that side which is in the count's room, is a painting on glass, representing St. Cecilia, so exquisitely done, that it is supposed to be very valuable, and which I had at that time removed, in order that I might have free egress and regress; but it is now in its proper place. In the interstices of this

painting the glass is plain, so that when the panel is open, you may see and hear all which passes, without being observed, provided there is no light in my mother's room."

All agreed to this proposal, and all were equally anxious for the time of developement to arrive.

Felicia promised to fetch them on the following evening, saying she must be gone, having little time to spare. Elvira wished her to stay, observing she did not look well.

"Nor am I," said Felicia; "but cannot now explain the cause; that you shall know hereafter; for the present, farewell!" She quickly closed the aperture through which she passed, leaving her friends concerned for her altered looks.

"I would not lose her for all the world," sighed Adela.

"I fear," said Elvira, "she begins to be uneasy on account of her marriage."

"Poor

“Poor young creature ! I wonder she was not miserable about that before now,” Annette observed.

“ She is an amiable, incomprehensible character !” said Orlando. “ Strange that I should have lived so long in the castle, and never saw her before to-night !—You say, mother, she married the count my sister was destined for : pray who is this count ?”

“ That no one knows,” answered Elvira ; “ but I have my suspicions. The temporary glance Annette and I caught of him, on the night of his wedding, filled us with terror ; for he rushed in here with De Torza in search of Adela ; but to-morrow evening we shall have a full view of him, and I shall then see if my apprehensions are with or without foundation.”

“ Surely,” said Orlando, “ he cannot be——”

“ Nay,” interrupted Elvira, “ I will not say who I suppose this person to be,
K 2 till

till I can speak with more certainty ; and to change the subject, tell us how you like the gaieties of a court ?”

“ Ah, do tell me,” said Adela, “ if you have found a lady to your taste—such an one as you would like to marry ?”

“ Would Adela be pleased, if I was to say I had ?” asked Orlando.

“ Oh no,” she answered ; “ I would not have you marry on any account ; for what is to become of my mother and me then ?”

“ While our mother and you remain in the unfortunate circumstances you are in,” replied Orlando, “ rest assured I cannot admit a third person to share my heart.”

Adela embraced him, mingling her tears with the warm kiss she gave, and hastened out of the room to conceal her feelings.

“ By St. Cecilia,” exclaimed Orlando, as his eye followed her, “ her rich beauty has received a large addition since I left !

I thought

I thought her then the loveliest of her sex, but now—now she seems more than mortal !”

“ She is the handsomest creature I ever saw,” said Elvira, “ and is as unconscious of it as if she had been always blind ; yet, my son, I should have rejoiced if you had found some one you could have presented to me as another daughter.”

“ Unfortunately,” replied Orlando, “ I compared all with our Adela, and they all faded into disgust.”

It was late ere this affectionate family separated for the night ; and then it was not to sleep, but to revolve on the past, and conjecture on the future. Early in the morning Paulo arrived at the castle, and sending in his respects to De Torza, asked permission to see him. The haughty lord said, he was too much engaged to hear him preach or pray at that time ; but he might go to the ladies in the left wing, whose imbecile minds were

alone calculated to receive his doctrines. Paulo was neither surprised nor offended at the refusal, and followed Murdico, who unlocked the outward door of the left wing, and admitted him to those who he knew would receive him with pleasure.

Great indeed was the joy of the ladies on seeing their old friend, and still greater was that of Paulo, on beholding Orlando, as he came from his hiding-place, whither he had retired on hearing the key turn, expecting to see no one but De Torza.

“ My son,” said Paulo, “ welcome to the heart of an old man !” grasping the youth’s hand.

“ Thou art as welcome to the heart of a young one,” answered Orlando. “ Oh, my father, how much have I stood in need of such a spiritual director as you since we parted !”

“ Daughter,” said Paulo, turning to Elvira, “ let us return thanks for this
unlooked-

unlooked-for happiness—let us acknowledge the kindness of Heaven, in permitting us to see your son once more !”

The little family knelt around the pious man, for Annette was always considered as one of themselves, while he with holy fervour poured forth the sentiments of all, in one of his short but gratefully-pathetic prayers. They rose, each softened with holy gratitude ; for though this had been a world of suffering to all, yet each had much to be thankful for.

Paulo was shocked at hearing what his young friend had gone through since he left Toledo, and equally astonished at the strange occurrences within the castle. Many hours flew swiftly on, yet the half was not told ; but Paulo thought it prudent not to prolong his visit, though he desired to make one of the party in the evening, and promised to wait for them near the pillar which Adela was once concealed in. He rang the bell,

and the great door was immediately opened by the old gaoler Murdico, when Paulo took his leave.

Every hour now seemed to pass more slowly than the last, till the time arrived for a visit from Felicia, who kept her promise, and brought with her one of father Francisco's cloaks, which he had left at the castle. This, she said, was to throw over them, one by one, as they went from the pillar to her mother's room.—“ Francisco,” she continued, “ is so frequently seen in all parts of the castle muffled up in this cloak, that if any one should see you, they will suppose it to be him, and pass on. As I observed before, there is no door of communication between my mother's room and the count's; so that if any alarm should happen, don De Torza will have to go round a considerable distance, to get to the room you will be in, and you may in that time make your escape to the pillar. And now I have little more
to

to add, for the ladies, I am confident, need no caution; but to you, don Orlando, I say—*be prudent.*”

He promised to obey his sweet counsellor, and the party sallied forth.

Orlando supported Elvira and Adela, while Felicia gave her arm to Annette. There was nothing *nouvel* in the journey to Felicia and Adela, they had travelled that way so often, and the gay spirits of the former at that time helped to dissipate the surrounding gloom. The three who were strangers to those dismal parts of the castle could not help expressing their wonder, that two unprotected girls dared venture to traverse such places; and as they passed through the armory, Annette cast many a fearful glance, as though she thought each suit of armour contained a foe within; but when they came to the trap, where they were to leap down on the coffin, they involuntarily halted; and Annette declared she had not courage to proceed.

Adela smiled, and springing through, said—"What I dare do, surely my faithful friend and nurse may."

Annette, abashed, gave her hand to Adela, suffering herself to be pulled through: Elvira and Orlando followed, Felicia bringing up the rear, and closing the trap-door.

The damp gloominess of the vault, and the narrow winding passage, did not tend to lighten the spirits of the party, who were not sorry when they found themselves at the bottom of the broken flight of steps, which led up to the pillar, and terminated their subterraneous journey.

Felicia went to reconnoitre, and returned, saying the coast was clear. She threw the cloak over Adela, who, knowing the way to Melina's room, offered to be the first who should go, and went tripping along, till her young friend advised her to imitate the walk of Francisco. Having deposited her charge,
Felicia

Felicia returned with the cloak, and met Paulo waiting near the pillar. Annette was the next who was to go, and enveloped herself in the cloak; but had not followed her guide far, ere she was accosted by her father Murdico.—“ Well, master Francisco,” said he, “ so you love a pretty girl, and a cup of good wine, as well as the worst man among us! Hey-day! why you reel now! well, well, priests are but made of flesh and blood like the rest of us! But, I say, what are you following our pretty countess up and down for?—Take care I do not tell madam Melina.”

“ Father Francisco is under a vow of silence,” said Felicia, “ therefore go about your business.”

“ Oh, I dare say the father is going about *his* business,” interrupted Murdico, with a significant nod.

Paulo perceiving Ann^{ette} was unable to stand, stepped up, and told Murdico he was happy to find him sober for once.

“ Why yes, master Paulo, I believe I am now,” he answered; “ but do not know how long I shall remain so, for I am on my way to my favourite wine cave. However, if *priests* may be permitted to comfort themselves with a nice wench, and a drop of wine, I see no harm in their followers doing the same; so farewell, master Paulo, I will go and drink your health directly.”

He turned to the right, in a contrary direction, to the great relief of his auditors; when Felicia dragged Annette on, who was more dead than alive. On entering Melina’s room, she burst into a flood of tears, saying—“ My wretched father is, alas, still the same!”

Adela flew to console her, and it was not till that moment that Felicia understood Annette to be the daughter of Murdico. There was no time for explanation, and she returned to conduct Elvira, and then Orlando, who arrived in safety. Paulo immediately joined them,
when

when Felicia shewed him the strong bolts on the inside the room-door; then unfastening the panel, told him not to open it in less than ten minutes, saying she could not remain with them, as her presence was required elsewhere; and taking the lamp with her, left them in total darkness.

Expectation was wound up to the highest pitch during the ten minutes, till Paulo guessed the time was past, and gently drew back the panel. The unpainted parts of the glass were numerous, but small, yet sufficiently large to serve as peepholes to the company present.

Their hearts throbbed quick, as they beheld De Torza, with hasty and irregular strides, pace the elegant apartment they looked into. His countenance betrayed disappointment in its darkest colours, and his fine features seemed convulsed with vexation. At the further end of the room lay a gentleman extend-
ed

ed on a couch, with his face shaded by his left hand, his right arm being in a sling. The nurse was at a table, with a bottle of medicine in her hand, pouring out her patient's next dose. This woman was the most disgusting female the bystanders had ever contemplated; she was of short stature, clumsy make, being almost as thick as she was long, with a large hump on her back; her countenance seemed almost demoniac, the strong lines of which were partly hid by the ragged grey locks which hung in disorder about her.

A silence of some minutes elapsed, which was broken by De Torza, turning quickly round to the person on the couch, saying—"What is your demand now?"

"When you have digested what I said last, I will tell you," the person replied.

"That request I will never grant," said De Torza.

"By

“ By the infernal powers but you shall !” exclaimed the other, rising from the sofa, and coming forward.

The concealed party involuntarily shuddered on beholding him.

“ The Mask, the Mask !” said Annette, in a low voice.

“ Leolfo !” ejaculated Elvira.

“ Oh, ’tis the count !” faintly said Adela.

“ The assassin of the king !” exclaimed Orlando, rather louder. “ *That* is the villain I shot in the right arm, as he raised it to stab our monarch : let me now dispatch him !”

Adela laid her hand on his arm, as he drew his sword ; and fixing her eloquent eyes on his, softly said—“ Be prudent.”

“ I will,” replied Orlando, “ I will,” as he returned the weapon to its scabbard.

“ My son,” said Paulo, “ justice must be distributed by a higher hand than yours :

yours: we came here to observe, not to act."

The count and De Torza stood viewing each other with fixed defiance.—
"By this splintered arm I swear," continued the count, "I *will* have my boon!"

"I would that arm had not been splintered," said De Torza, "we might then fight it out!"

"And think you I would put up with less than my right?" asked the count.

"*Right!*" exclaimed De Torza, "you have no *right* to claim aught of me!—Your conditions are not fulfilled—our agreement is rendered null and void, for Ferdinand lives yet!"

"And who was it saved him?" demanded the count—"was it not your own son? who rushed between the king and my dagger's point, was it not your boasted Orlando?—who shot me in the arm, and who am I to thank for this broken limb—am I not indebted
for

for all this to your own and highly-esteemed son?"

"No, no, no!" answered De Torza.

"By Heavens, but for him, Ferdinand had now slept with his forefathers!" said the count.

"I tell you," interrupted De Torza, "you are mistaken!"

"I will bring the king and his attendants to prove it, if nothing else will convince you," answered the count. "If you have a son who acts diametrically opposite to your wish, who renders all your deep-laid schemes abortive, am *I* to be answerable for such conduct in him?"

"A gallant hero you must be, to suffer yourself to be foiled by a boy," said De Torza, "if it was *Orlando* who wounded you!"

"What," asked the count, "do you add insult to suffering?—Have I not endured enough from your son?"

"No!" vociferated De Torza, stamping, "it could not be *my* son who wounded
ed

ed you!—Orlando is *not* mine—Orlando *never was* my son!”

He threw himself exhausted on the sofa; the count was kept silent by amazement; the nurse crossed herself, and held up both her hands, ejaculating—“ St. Ursula protect my virginity !”

The listeners were all electrified with De Torza's last speech. Elvira's every limb shook, as she leaned for support on her beloved Orlando, whose manly heart seemed inclined to burst its natural bounds through indignation; silent pearly drops coursed each other down the pale cheek of Adela; Annette stood aghast with surprise; and Paulo breathed a short prayer.

“ Fear me not, my more than mother; thou shalt not lose me, Adela,” said Orlando, as he put an arm round each; “ thine I always *have* been, and thine I ever *will* be !”

The attention of all was turned to De
Torza,

Torza, who exclaimed—"Curses on my want of prudence!"

"It seems then," said the count, "it was not *your* son who shot me. If Orlando is not yours, whose is he?"

"Count," observed De Torza, "you have, by your obstinate perseverance, wrung half my secret from me, which I had determined should have expired with me. That Orlando is not mine, I confess; but *whose* he is, will still remain buried within my own breast."

"Do you refuse to let me know to whom I am indebted for all the agony I have suffered?" demanded the count.—
"You must naturally suppose I shall spare no pains to find him out."

"That is not in the power of man to do," answered De Torza: "not a human beings live who knows aught of his origin save myself."

"Listen to me, don," said the count: "that general is a bad soldier, who does not make use of all advantage against an enemy.

enemy. Persist in refusing to fulfil the agreement pending between us, and I will hasten to Madrid, to lay all your plots and plans before the king. If I cannot inform Orlando who he is, I can tell him who he is *not*; and as he stands high in Ferdinand's favour, no force will be wanting to extort the secret from you!"

"Do you brave me?" said De Torza. "*Here* the secret is locked," striking his breast, "and *here* it shall for ever remain!"

A long silent pause ensued; and at last the nurse said—"Gentlemen, you must allow me to speak. This violence on both sides will do my patient no good; you must each give way a little. Let me persuade you, my lord count, not to demand so much; and let me advise you, mighty don De Torza, to grant part of what he asks."

"Cease thy prating, Goody!" replied De Torza. "He may do his worst; let him

him go to Ferdinand, and confess himself his intended murderer !”

“ Who instigated me to the deed ?” quickly demanded the count—“ did not you offer me a gem more brilliant than ever Ferdinand could boast ?—Have I not risked my life, and almost lost it, to gain that prize ?”

“ You have not gained it,” answered De Torza, “ the deed remains undone !”

“ Nurse,” said the count, “ give me another draught !” She poured one out, which he quickly swallowed, and snatching a sword which lay on a marble slab, went up to De Torza, saying—“ I have one arm left yet, and had rather lose my life than my right !”

“ Don de Torza,” said the nurse, “ whatever his demand is, let me persuade you to grant it.”

“ What !” exclaimed De Torza, “ and let him have two wives at once ?”

“ *Two* wives ?” demanded the nurse.

“ He has married Felicia, and wants
to

to unite himself to Adela," replied De Torza.

"Is it possible?" asked the nurse.

"It is possible!" answered the count. "Felicia I hate, and Adela I love!—Felicia was forced upon me, while Adela is withheld from me. Felicia is no more my wife than Adela, save the form of marriage mumbled over by the priest; as I never spent a moment in the company of either, except in the presence of some other person; and under these circumstances, can Felicia be considered as my wife?"

The nurse tore her outward garment off, her hump fell to the ground, her grey straggling locks were thrown to a distance, and Felicia stood before them in her wedding-dress.

"What the devil do I see?" demanded the count.

"Your *wife*!" replied Felicia. "Nay, hear me, count," she added, as he turned from her; "you will not deny that to
me

me you owe your life and your limb ; you alone know with what unceasing solicitude I have watched every pang you have suffered, though perhaps you will be the last to excuse the innocent deception I have assumed, in personating the woman who was to have attended you. I will now put your gratitude to the test," continued Felicia, dropping on one knee, " and as you have so often asked me how you should return my skill and attention, I now request, that as you are so satisfied with my acting the part of your nurse, you will allow me to perform that of your wife?"

" Never !" answered the count.

" Ungrateful monster !" ejaculated De Torza. " But *I* will see this young creature righted !"

" *You ?*" interrogated the count—" do *you* threaten ? I have still an arm left, therefore defend yourself !"

He made a thrust at De Torza, who exclaimed, as he drew his sword out of
the

the scabbard—" Hold! I will take no advantage, and shall use my left hand. Come on!"

The two assailants were fiercely encountering each other; but ere they closed, Felicia threw herself between them, and received the sword of each in her bosom.

Unfortunate, ill-fated being! The act was so sudden, that they drew back their swords, dripping with the warm blood of their innocent victim. She gave one shriek, and was no more! The ruffians stood motionless on either side the corpse of the once gay and interesting Felicia.

It is true, her murder was not premeditated; but she fell a sacrifice to the ungovernable rage of her father and husband. Such were the fatal effects of unrestrained passion; such was the recompence she received for her too tender solicitude towards the man she had, though unacquainted with his character,
innocently

innocently given her hand to. Her last piercing shriek was heard by Melina, who being assured it was her well-known voice, precipitately rushed into the room, and in her haste, fell over the bleeding body of her child. But who shall describe the mother's harrowed feelings as she, rising, knelt beside the sad spectacle? She shrieked not—spoke not—wept not: her hair stood erect—her eyes seemed bursting from their sockets—her mouth extended, while she drivelled like an idiot; her limbs stiffened with agony, as she stretched out her arms to defend the remains of her loved Felicia.

Such a picture of dreadful grief as she represented, touched even the flinty heart of De Torza, who, for the first time in his life, felt remorse—"Unhappy woman," he cried, "made doubly so by my hand! First I seduced thine innocence, and then robbed thine offspring of life! Would that I could restore thy
VOL. III. L child!—

child!—would that I could undo this deed!”

Vain was it that he attempted consolation; the living sufferer heard him not, for reason had fled her seat. Transfixed to the spot, she still knelt; still did she seem the immovable image of despair.

De Torza rang for Murdico, who immediately came, to know his master's orders.—“Remove that spectacle!” said the don, pointing to Melina.

“What is going forward now?” demanded Murdico. “Who is this lies weltering in their blood?—What, don, could not thy fell sword spare this pretty butterfly?—You knew she meant ill to none—you knew Felicia shared the love of all.—Alas! poor young creature! I wish I had known you meditated her death!”

“Heap curses on me,” said De Torza, “for I deserve them! Her death was not premeditated, and is the first action of my life which I repent.”

“How like a statue her mother looks!”

Murdico

Murdico observed: "she is cold and stiff, though she breathes."

He went, and shook her violently by the shoulder. Melina did not move her eyes; but groaning deeply, laid herself down, and clasped her arms firmly round the dead body of her child.

Murdico tried to loosen the arms; but that was impossible, for they seemed clenched by the convulsive grasp of death. What to do he knew not, for he could not bury the dead and the living together, and it was out of his power to separate them. He protested he had not felt so much since he saw the white hand of the murdered Annette de Courville.

The count stood a silent spectator, till De Torza said, with great bitterness—"This is *your* doing!"

"With *your* assistance," tauntingly replied the count. "Why not send for surgical aid?"

Francisco was immediately sent for;

but was gone to a distance. No assistance was at hand ; when the count, with Murdico, took up the hapless mother and daughter together, and laid them on a couch, where we will leave them, and turn to the spectators behind the painting of St. Cecilia.

As the fatal swords entered the bosom of Felicia, Adela echoed her friend's last shriek, and fainted in the arms of Orlando. The prayers of Paulo ascended to heaven's gate, with the freed spirit of Felicia, and craved an entrance there. Elvira and Annette were trying to support each other, who were sinking with equal agitation, as Orlando threw the cloak over himself and Adela, while he bore her swiftly to the left wing of the castle. He laid her down, then returned for Elvira, who he carried concealed under the cloak, and set her down on one of the broken steps, at the bottom of the flight, inside the pillar, while he fetched Annette. Paulo followed, who silently
assisted

assisted Annette the rest of the way, while Orlando carried Elvira with the apparent strength of Hercules, and the swiftness of Mercury ; for the thoughts of Adela's situation gave him power and speed.

At sight of Adela, who still lay motionless, Elvira shed a copious flood of tears, which tended greatly to relieve her ; and forgetting her own sufferings in those of her child, busied herself, with the assistance of Paulo, in recovering the still inanimate Adela. It was some time before she came to herself, and when capable of recollecting the past scene, she wept the melancholy fate of her much-admired friend on the bosom of Elvira, who clasped her to her heart, saying—" Merciful Heaven, *my* child is spared !"

Paulo, seeing that rationality was restored to his female friends, left them to the care of Orlando, whose inquiring eye watched with intensity the pale counte-

nance of her he had loved from the first moment he beheld her infant, agile form move to the notes of her mother's guitar. Now it was that he perceived why he could love no other woman—now it was that he saw he loved her with a passion so fervent, he dared not acknowledge the full extent of it to himself; yet always supposing her to be his sister, that love was free from guilt. Never had he cast a thought on Adela, except to admire that virtue, patience, beauty, and fascination, he could nowhere see equalled.

He was released from the odium of supposing himself the son of De Torza; yet might not that release form the basis of his future misery? In Adela alone his happiness centred, and better he thought would it be for him to be loved by her as the brother of her fondest affections, than to be her rejected suitor. Much as he wished for the time to arrive when he might ask to know his destiny,

destiny, yet he feared that time would never come; for he plainly felt his courage fail, at the shadow of losing a particle of that affection, which had been his support from his boyish days; and thought it preferable to be loved by her in any light, than not to possess her love at all.—“Should I,” he mentally said, “be the only one that loves, should I have cherished this insurmountable passion, to meet with no return, should she have regarded me only as her nearest and dearest relative, and finding that tie of consanguinity dissolved, cease to love me any longer, better had the disclosure of my birth never been made, and I still have retained the first place in her heart, until death had stopped its last beat.”

Such were the reflections that rapidly passed in the mind of Orlando, as he knelt by the side of Adela, who still sobbed on the bosom of her mother.

Annette being more recovered than

the rest, observed, it was strange Paulo should leave them in such distress.

“ Though I do not know his reason,” replied Elvira, “ we shall find he is right in the end ; for to do good, seems to be the sole purpose for which he lives.”

“ Perhaps,” said Adela, raising her head, and clasping her hands, “ he is gone to try to recover my dear Felicia ; but that is useless, for her last shriek, which now rings in my ears, was the shriek of death.”

“ My Adela,” said Orlando, “ for your mother’s sake, for my sake, whose lives hang on yours, grieve not thus, endeavour to bear this affliction with more fortitude.”

“ I will, I will,” she answered, resting her head on his shoulder, “ for the sake of a mother and a brother so dear.—What did I say—brother?—No, I have no brother now ! The stroke was double ! Have not I lost my amiable young friend ?
—and

—and am not I deprived of my only protector, my beloved brother?”

“Who would wish you to acknowledge him by a nearer and a stronger tie,” said Orlando, interrupting her.

Elvira motioned for him to say no more, and turned the subject of conversation to Paulo’s absence; but Elvira knew not that, afflicted as they were, he had left them to seek those he thought stood in need of his assistance, for such was the tenour of this holy man’s conduct, that wherever he thought his duty called him, there he was to be found.

It was the wretched Melina now claimed his attention, and he went without hesitation to the chamber of the count, which he entered without leave, or staying to ask it; and addressing De Torza, said—“Some little time ago I heard an agonizing shriek, which was followed by a deep silence; I come to see if an accident has happened, and whether I can be of any service.”

He found De Torza and the count bitterly upbraiding each other. They seemed surprised at his entrance, and De Torza pointed to the sofa, where lay the pitiable Melina, with her arms still clenched round the body of her loved Felicia. Paulo tried to loosen her hold; but that could not be effected, for she clasped her with the grasp of strong convulsions. He opened a vein in Melina's neck, a few drops of blood followed, the arms unclosed, and let the body fall. He examined the remains of Felicia; but, alas! death reigned triumphant there.

Paulo conveyed Melina to her apartment, and exerted his utmost skill, though recovery seemed hopeless. She *did* exist, but reason was extinct; she breathed, but knew it not: medicine was useless, for when put into her mouth, she had not sense to swallow it. To attempt consolation would have been vain, for she could not understand it.

All that Paulo could do, was to pray
for

for her. We are told the prayers of the righteous avail much; and surely the prayers of such a man as Paulo would not be in vain. It must not be inferred that this exemplary man thought *himself* a righteous person—far from it; for after having fulfilled his duty to the utmost stretch of his power, he would smite his breast, and say—"God be merciful to me a sinner!"

No secular motives induced him to reside at the castle of Toledo; but he thought his duty called him there. He saw the silent sufferings of the patient, Elvira, and had every reason to believe, if he had refused to be her spiritual guide, De Torza would admit no other. He supported Annette under the dreadful reflection that her father was a murderer: he reared with patriarchal care the spotless soul of Adela, and taught them to look for consolation from here to hereafter. Even the lofty lord of the castle, and the hardened Murdico, were

the subjects of Paulo's prayers; for he thought it not impossible but repentance might overtake them, though at the eleventh hour.

Melina existed in the same senseless way for three days, without having swallowed any thing. On the morning of the fourth, recollection partly returned, and she said, in a faint voice—"Where is Filly?—Will not Filly come to close my eyes?"

Lucilla, a young girl, who had been bred up in the castle, and had watched by Melina's couch, presented herself, when the wretched patient mistaking her for Felicia, bestowed on her her fondest caresses, till fixing her eyes steadfastly on those of Lucilla, she exclaimed—"Away, away! thou art not my child! no, no, mine was barbarously murdered!" Then putting her hands before her eyes, she added—"These eyes beheld her weltering in her blood!"

The sufferer relapsed into another
strong

strong fit, from which it seemed unlikely she should recover. The violence of it at last subsided, leaving her apparently lifeless ; and Paulo was long ere he could be certain she was not dead. At length her pulse languidly beat, and opening her eyes, she tried to speak, but could not ; her efforts to articulate were distressing, as she seemed so anxious for it. Having laid some time quiet, she again attempted, and with difficulty said to Paulo—" Can the blood of the child wash out the sin of the parent ?"

Paulo answered it could not, and pointed to a higher sacrifice than a fellow-creature, exhorting his patient to pray.

Melina placed her hands together, turned her eyes to Heaven, and said—" *Forgive!*" It was the last word she spoke ; her hands fell on her bosom, and her eyes closed for ever.

" May thy last request be granted !" ejaculated Paulo. He knelt by the body,

body, giving vent to his feelings, in an address to his Maker.

Having composed his mind, he went to announce the death of Melina to De Torza, who replied, it was as well that she was gone, as he should no longer be troubled with her.

Paulo was shocked at the unfeeling manner of De Torza; but the fact was, the latter had long wished her out of the way; for as he had had his desire, that was sufficient for him; and Melina being a woman of spirit, frequently resisted the arbitrary will of her master. It is certain the horror of her situation on beholding the unfortunate remains of her child, stabbed by his hand, touched him for a time; but as the clouds retain no mark from the lightning's flash, so his conscience closed after this temporary stroke.

The body of Felicia had been placed in some of the subterraneous parts of the castle, but not in the vault, and was brought at the request of Paulo, and laid

laid by her mother, in the same apartment, preparatory to interment.

The solemn ceremony took place in the evening of the next day, when the bodies were carried to their last home, by the men servants of the castle, and followed by the female domestics only. As the men placed the coffins on their shoulders, they lamented the unfortunate end of both mother and daughter. They thought well of Melina, who, though set at the head of the household affairs, had never presumed too much on her power, but, from the natural good nature of her disposition, had been friendly to all ; and there was not an inmate of the castle but delighted in the frolics of the artless, gay Felicia. But now what were they ? the finger of death had sealed those lips, which were so frequently clothed with a smile—had stiffened those agile limbs, which had so often meandered with the light step of the antelope, through those very parts of the castle
along

along which the offensive corpse of Felicia was now borne, and placed in that very vault she had introduced Adela into, even beneath that same coffin she had broken into, by stepping on it to reach the trap above.

“And this,” said Murdico, as he set down the coffin of Felicia, “and this is the end of all thy frolics!”

“Poor young thing!” added Jacobo, with a sigh, “I wish we had lost any one belonging to the castle but her!”

Many were the sincere regrets for the misfortunes of the deceased. The body of Melina was placed beside that of her beloved child; when Paulo, in an affecting, solemn manner performed the funeral service. At the close of it, he gave a short, pathetic address to the bystanders, exhorting them to prepare themselves for the like occasion; but Murdico declared he could stand it no longer, and must go to refresh himself with a tankard of wine.

The

The rest of the men followed him, one by one, save Jacobo, who alone remained with the female servants, to hear the remainder of Paulo's admonitions. The women were much affected, while Jacobo sobbed aloud, and kneeling down by the remains of Felicia, hid his face on her coffin, seeming to forget any one was present.—“ Sweet saint,” said he, “ thou art now happy, far happier than I could have made thee ; though by rejecting me, thou didst wed thyself unto a premature death ! But here I swear, in the sight of Heaven, to avenge thy wrongs !” He started up, as if recollection returned, and rushed out of the vault.

Paulo and the women followed in consternation ; for if Jacobo loved Felicia, which was evident from the apostrophe he had just uttered, this was the first time any one of them had heard a word on the subject.

Paulo sought for the youth ; but he
was

was nowhere to be found ; and supposing he had retired to vent that grief which he could suppress no longer, thought it best to let the keenness of his feelings subside in some degree, before he attempted to reason with him ; yet Paulo was uneasy at the resolute tone of voice in which Jacobo had sworn to avenge the wrongs of her he had in silence loved.

The good priest visited his friends in the left wing ; and in order to assuage the affliction of Adela for the loss of her young friend, argued it was better that Felicia was taken from the evil to come, than that she should have lived to develop the character of the count, and probably spend years of the deepest misery. Her husband and De Torza were, notwithstanding, guilty of having caused her death, by giving way to their ungovernable rage.

Adela could not contradict this assertion ; but the anguishing thought, that she

she was the original cause of Felicia's unfortunate end, by permitting her to marry the count, that she herself might escape the dreaded union, dwelt heavily on her mind. She wished circumstances had permitted her to be present at the funeral of her lost friend, and resolved to visit the vault the next evening alone, as she could pass by the monumental door into the small chapel, and go that way Felicia had taught her.

Soon as night began to chase away the brightness of the following day, Adela took her lamp, and went, as she had lately done, to offer her evening orisons in the newly-discovered chapel, then proceeded along the narrow corridor, down the flight of steps into the armory. Every place seemed filled with unusual gloom, for Adela had lost the friend who used to make all things gay. Stopping at the trap-door, she set down her lamp, and was uneasy at finding it so difficult to raise; it seemed almost too much for her;

her ; but after repeated efforts, the spring yielded to her strength, and lifting up the door, she looked down on the broken coffin, with the melancholy reflection, that the nimble foot which had burst into it would step there 'no more.

Adela descended, and springing on the ground, her eye rested on the remains of her lamented friend. She stood motionless, her eye not moistened with a tear; but heaving a deep sigh, and crossing her hands on her bosom, she prayed for the repose of Felicia's soul. Her mind being somewhat relaxed from such intensity of feeling, she threw herself beside the coffin, placing one arm on it, as she supported her head with the other, and wept some time in silence. At last her grief became loud, and she exclaimed—"Thus, thus, let me clasp the remains of my loved, my lost Felicia!" A deep sigh echoed through the vault, when Adela raising her head, looked anxiously around, listened for awhile.

awhile, but all was silence; and she resumed her melancholy attitude, saying —“ Vain hope!—would that that sigh came from the lips of thee, whose loss I must unceasingly deplore; but those lips, alas! are sealed in death; and I—I was the unfortunate cause of all! Oh, bitter, cruel fate—what would not I give the deed could be undone!” A groan struck upon her ear. She started, listened, but heard no more. Adela was free from superstitious fears of the dead, but had frequently trembled at the living: she demanded in a firm voice—“ Who, and what are you, that inhabit this drear abode, sacred to the dead alone?”

No answer was returned, and Adela concluded the sound must have been occasioned by the wind, which murmured through the grating along the vault. Again she was absorbed by vain regrets, and laying her head on the coffin, said —“ Would I had died in thy stead, Felicia!

licia ! but may thy pure soul rest in eternal felicity !”

“ Bless you,” replied a voice—“ Heaven for ever bless you !”

Adela heard a rustling sound on the other side the coffin, and a man rose up before her ! She did not faint, as many ladies would have done in such a situation, nor did she scream ; but earnestly regarding the figure, she was convinced it was human, and on that account to be dreaded.

“ Lady,” said the person, kneeling, “ do not fear that I shall harm you : no, far be my conduct from that. For the sake of her whose loss you so sincerely deplore, I would lay down my life in defence of yours ; and here, over the dear remains of Felicia, I swear to devote the rest of my days to your service !”

Adela was relieved on finding the man was not an emissary of the count's, but that it was Jacobo, who had spent hours beside the coffin of Felicia, and
had

had determined, on Adela entering the vault, not to discover himself, for fear of alarming her: but when he heard her pray for the eternal rest of Felicia, he forgot his determination, and called on Heaven to bless her for ever.

“ I thank you for your offers of friendship,” replied Adela, “ and thank you for respecting the memory of her whose loss I lament.”

“ Then for her sake promise me, that if cruel necessity should ever leave you in want of a protecting arm, you will not scorn mine, should it be stretched to defend you ?” said Jacobo.

“ Never, never,” Adela answered; “ but shall think myself blessed in having such a protector as you.”

Orlando was looking down through the trap at this moment, and heard the last speech of Adela. Amazement almost froze his faculties, as he stood rivetted to the spot, and saw Jacobo, who was still kneeling, take the hand of
Adela,

Adela, and pressing it between his, said —“ I am honoured by this confidence, and in the hope of rendering you service I will try to live.” He arose, and respectfully withdrew.

Horror, distraction, jealousy, and love, reigned at once in the heart of Orlando. Adela, unconscious of what was passing above her, took a mournful look at the remains of her friend, and sighing, ejaculated—“ Oh that thou hadst given thine hand to one more worthy of thee than the count!”

“ May you, Adela,” said Orlando, as he stepped down, “ never give your hand to one who is unworthy of *you*! —may your natural good sense and penetration not be blinded by a menial!”

Adela started at the sound of his voice, saying—“ What means Orlando?”

“ I mean,” he replied, “ a thousand times more than I can express! Oh, Adela, that a being such as *you*, whose angelic purity of mind seemed to have
its

its source in heaven, and hold communion with the 'spirits there—that you should—should——oh God! I cannot name it, though my eyes saw, and my ears heard it!”

“Saw what?” demanded Adela—
“heard what?—has Orlando seen and heard any thing that distresses him, and will he keep it secret from me?”

“Nay, feign not ignorance,” Orlando answered; “too well you understand me; and I, alas! have seen and heard that which has blasted my peace for ever!”

“Is this a place to rave in thus?” asked Adela—“would you rouse the ashes of the dead, and induce them to reprove the unhallowed language which you use?”

“True, this is not a place for me to vent my harrowed feelings in,” retorted Orlando; “but it was thought a fit place to receive the professions of a——oh that my eyes should have witnessed

the scene!" He fell on the coffin of Felicia, in a frenzied laugh.

Adela, terrified and distracted, threw herself on his shoulder, and wept violently. In vain she entreated him to leave the spot, in those persuasive accents so peculiar to herself—in vain she gently reproved him for giving way to the violence of his feelings in the vault of the dead; he seemed insensible to all her exertions. She feared to leave him to go in search of assistance, and seating herself by him, chafed his beating temples, bathing them with her tears. He laid a considerable time; then starting up suddenly, he said—"Let all the world be base, so Adela is pure!" He took her trembling hand, imprinted on it a fervent kiss, then fixing his eyes on her pale face, as the tears coursed each other down, he asked—"Are those tears for me? Oh, then I am blessed, and Adela is innocent!"

"My Orlando, my beloved brother
(for

(for so I must sometimes call you), let us leave this place—let us hasten to my mother,” she replied.

Adela passed through the trap; then stooping down, gave him her hand, as he followed, muttering—“ Brother! yes, when she thought I was her brother, then, and then only, she loved me; but now——” He did not finish the sentence, but rushing wildly from her, stopped not till he threw himself before the altar in the little chapel, next to Elvira’s apartment.

Adela, terrified beyond endurance, did not come up with him till he was finishing a solemn oath to take the life of some person; but who it was she did not understand. Her tottering limbs had borne her to the altar, but were unable to sustain her longer, when sinking at his feet, with uplifted hands, she faintly said—“ Oh, Orlando, this, this is wrong indeed!”

Seeing her lie motionless, he caught

her up, and pressing his burning lips on her cold forehead, ran with her into Elvira's chamber, then throwing his lifeless burden on the sofa, he exclaimed—
“There, *I* have done it; it is I have killed your lovely Adela!”

The distress of Elvira cannot be easily imagined, at the sight of her daughter, and the expressions of Orlando. Adela was to all appearance dead, and Orlando to all appearance mad. He stamped, raved, tore his hair, execrated every one around him, shook Adela with violence, calling himself her murderer. Elvira feared something had happened very dreadful, but could not comprehend what; for the only answer she could get to the anxious questions she put to him was, that he had killed Adela.

With the assistance of Annette she raised the senseless Adela, and saw blood on her left temple.—“There, there!” exclaimed Orlando, “I told you I had murdered her, and my hands are im-
brued

brued in the blood of the purest being that was ever called woman !”

“ My son,” said Elvira, wringing her hands, “ do have compassion on a wretched mother, and tell me what has happened.”

“ I have told you,” replied Orlando : “ and you will not believe that I have murdered that angel, though she lies dead before you !”

Annette, being more collected than any one present, had applied warm water to the temple, which encouraged the bleeding, and shewed some signs of life, when Adela, to the joy of her agonized mother, slowly recovered.

The extravagant delight of Orlando, when he heard Adela speak, was as terrific as his assertions that he had killed her ; and Elvira had now the misery of perceiving his senses were affected.

The first words Adela spoke were—
“ Take care of Orlando—something terrible must have happened to him !”

Elvira and Annette tried to sooth him; but he was insensible to every voice except Adela's. When she spoke, he was calm—when Elvira reasoned, he raved. Adela accounted for the bleeding at her temple, by saying she fell with that side of her head on one of the steps of the altar. Elvira was relieved by this explanation; and now that her beloved child was restored, she had leisure to turn her attention to the distressing state of Orlando. She had ever loved him with the affection of a mother, and though now convinced he was not her son, the unconquerable regard he bore her daughter, the unceasing filial attention he still paid to herself, and his irreproachable conduct through every part of his life, still made him dear to her. She attempted to give him a composing cordial, but could not make him understand he was to drink it, till Adela took the draught in her hand, and smiling, put it to her lips. He took the
opiate

opiate from her, and returning her smile, drank it off.

Drowsiness soon crept over the senses of Orlando; yet if Adela attempted to move, he roused himself up immediately, and fearful of losing her, took her hand, which he continued to hold, till Morpheus strewing his poppies around him, plunged his recollection of the past in oblivion.

Adela, in a whisper, related to her mother all that had passed in the vault; but as she was not aware of Orlando being present when she, in reply to Jacobo's offer, innocently said, *she should think herself blest in having such a protector*, Elvira could not find out the cause of Orlando's violent agitation. He continued to sleep, but it was such as opiates generally obtain, and he seemed to be visited by a frightful dream, for at different times he called out—"Perfidious slave!—crush him to the earth, and that lovely deceiver with him!"

Adela was terrified at hearing these sentences, for she feared he was dreaming of some lady at the court of Madrid, being unconscious that any thing had occurred in her conduct to distress him. Elvira was alarmed at his quick, irregular pulse, wishing for the opinion of Paulo, but knew not how to convey a message to him; when Adela thought of Jacobo, and begged to seek him in the vault. Her mother reluctantly consented, provided Annette went with her; for she trembled for the fate of her child, if out of her sight but for a moment; yet the sudden illness of Orlando she plainly saw required immediate assistance. She cautioned Adela not to go beyond the vault, lest she might be seen by any of the inmates of the castle, and their knowledge of a secret communication should be discovered.

Adela hastened to the spot, supported by her affectionate Annette, with the trembling haste which fears for the safety of
of

of the object of her first and only regard occasioned; for she loved with equal constancy as Orlando, but being taught by her amiable mother to subdue her feelings, the sentiments she entertained appeared with less violence in *her* than in him, who unknowingly possessed that heart he would have given worlds to gain. Adela lifting up the trap, looked into the vault, but all was still as death itself; and she sickened with disappointment on not perceiving Jacobo there. A sudden chill shook her frame, as she leaned on Annette; then bursting into tears, she exclaimed—"He will be lost, and where shall I and my mother seek for comfort!" A deep sigh made its way to her heart: she hesitated, listened, thought it was like what she had heard before; then springing down, saw the mourner again stretched beside the remains of his adored Felicia.

Jacobo arose, saying—"Welcome, lady, once more to these drear abodes!"

"Melancholy

“Melancholy has taken her seat here,” replied Adela, “and her sister, Misfortune, has induced me here to seek you, and request you to grant that friendship you so lately offered. You may be assured I believed your proffer sincere, by so soon putting it to the test.”

“Try me, and be convinced,” said Jacobo.

She then informed him of the sudden indisposition of Orlando, desiring him to find Paulo, and request his immediate assistance.

To the quick discerning eye of Jacobo the telltale blushes of Adela unfolded more than a sister's love, and he began to suspect they were not so nearly related as was generally believed. It is said, that lovers only can find out those who really love. He bowed, saying, Adela should hear from him in less than an hour.

“But where shall I find you?” Adela asked.

He

He answered—"At the monumental door, which leads into donna Elvira's apartment. Be not surprised, for I am acquainted with all the secret ways of the castle that you are, and many more; for mine was a hopeless passion from the beginning, as Felicia's mother scorned such a humble suitor as I was, having higher notions for her daughter; and I used to console myself with secretly following my love at a distance, to catch perchance a glimpse of her shadow, as I gambolled through these unfrequented places; or when Fortune was inclined to smile, and I was near enough to save her from a fall, which would sometimes happen, as she often stumbled incautiously, oh, the luxury of such a moment as that, has paid me for years of misery!" A big tear fell from his eye on the coffin of his mistress, as he stooped to kiss the lid, and grief choked his utterance, while he waved his hand to Adela, and hastily quitted the vault.

She

She staid a few moments, to pay a tribute of regard to the memory of her young friend, and then, with Annette, hastened back to Elvira. They found Orlando still sleeping, and they anxiously waited intelligence from Jacobo. In about ten minutes he appeared at the appointed place, to inform them Paulo was gone to visit the abbot, and he was going after him, but came first to let them know, that they might not be uneasy at his stay.

He had scarcely done speaking, when Orlando rousing up, steadfastly fixed his eyes on Jacobo, sprang on him, and seized him by the throat, exclaiming—“This is the villain who has robbed me of that angel’s love!” They wrestled together some time, to the extreme terror of the females present, when Jacobo, being the strongest of the two, released himself from the grasp of Orlando, pinioning the arms of the latter behind him. At this distressing moment they
heard

heard the key of the outward apartment turn, which denoted De Torza was coming; but, to their great relief, it was Paulo who entered. He was amazed at seeing the situation of all present; but with his accustomed humanity directed his attention to the person who most needed it. He found Orlando in a high fever, and with the assistance of Jacobo, bled him copiously, and repeating the draught Elvira had administered before, soon saw him in a state of calmness.

Paulo asked what had first irritated his patient to such a state of frenzy; but the ladies could not answer the question.

Jacobo penetrated deeper into the affair, saying, it was his opinion his young master must be in love, and had received some unexpected check to his passion. The deep blush which mantled on the cheek of Adela confirmed him in his opinion, though he mentioned the subject no more. Paulo proposed that he and Jacobo should sit up with the invalid,

lid,

lid, and the ladies retire to rest for the night, to which they reluctantly consented. Paulo did not neglect this opportunity of reasoning with Jacobo, respecting his having sworn to avenge the wrongs of Felicia, this being the first time they had met since the night of the funeral. Jacobo allowed the justice of the good man's observations, but could not part with the idea that it was his duty to avenge the death of Felicia, whenever her destroyers were thrown into his power; and all that Paulo could obtain was, a promise not to put his threat into immediate execution.

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